

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE (REV. 10-95)		ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER 10641-0001-3 PCT
TRANSMITTAL LETTER TO THE UNITED STATES DESIGNATED/ELECTED OFFICE (DO/EO/US) CONCERNING A FILING UNDER 35 U.S.C. 371		U.S. APPLICATION NO. (IF KNOWN, SEE 37 CFR 09/462502
INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO. PCT/JP98/03222	INTERNATIONAL FILING DATE July 16, 1998	PRIORITY DATE CLAIMED July 23, 1997 (earliest)
TITLE OF INVENTION PANEL FOR AIRBAG AND ITS PRODUCING METHOD		
APPLICANT(S) FOR DO/EO/US Yasuo KONDO, et al.		
Applicant herewith submits to the United States Designated/Elected Office (DO/EO/US) the following items and other information:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This is a FIRST submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371 <input type="checkbox"/> This is a SECOND or SUBSEQUENT submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This is an express request to begin national examination procedures (35 U.S.C. 371(f)) at any time rather than delay examination until the expiration of the applicable time limit set in 35 U.S.C. 371(b) and PCT Articles 22 and 39(1). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A proper Demand for International Preliminary Examination was made by the 19th month from the earliest claimed priority date. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A copy of the International Application as filed (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2)) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> is transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> has been transmitted by the International Bureau. <input type="checkbox"/> is not required, as the application was filed in the United States Receiving Office (RO/US). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A translation of the International Application into English (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2)). <input type="checkbox"/> A copy of the International Search Report (PCT/ISA/210). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amendments to the claims of the International Application under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3)) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> are transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau). <input type="checkbox"/> have been transmitted by the International Bureau. <input type="checkbox"/> have not been made; however, the time limit for making such amendments has NOT expired <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> have not been made and will not be made <input type="checkbox"/> A translation of the amendments to the claims under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3)) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> An oath or declaration of the inventor(s) (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(4)). <input type="checkbox"/> A copy of the International Preliminary Examination Report (PCT/IPEA/409). <input type="checkbox"/> A translation of the annexes to the International Preliminary Examination Report under PCT Article 36 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(5)). 		
Items 13 to 18 below concern document(s) or information included:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> An Information Disclosure Statement under 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98. <input type="checkbox"/> An assignment document for recording. A separate cover sheet in compliance with 37 CFR 3.28 and 3.31 is included. <input type="checkbox"/> A FIRST preliminary amendment. <input type="checkbox"/> A SECOND or SUBSEQUENT preliminary amendment. <input type="checkbox"/> A substitute specification. <input type="checkbox"/> A change of power of attorney and/or address letter. <input type="checkbox"/> Certificate of Mailing by Express Mail <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other items or information. 		
Request for Consideration of Documents Cited in International Search Report Notice of Priority Drawings (29 sheets) PCT/IB/304 PCT/IB/308 Amended Sheets (pages 1-15 and page 1 of drawings)		

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20. The following fees are submitted:		CALCULATIONS PTO USE ONLY																	
BASIC NATIONAL FEE (37 CFR 1.492 (a) (1) - (5)) :																			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Search Report has been prepared by the EPO or JPO \$840.00 <input type="checkbox"/> International preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.482) \$670.00 <input type="checkbox"/> No international preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.482) but international search fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2)) \$760.00 <input type="checkbox"/> Neither international preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) nor international search fee (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2)) paid to USPTO \$970.00 <input type="checkbox"/> International preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.482) and all claims satisfied provisions of PCT Article 33(2)-(4) \$96.00																			
ENTER APPROPRIATE BASIC FEE AMOUNT =		\$840.00																	
Surcharge of \$130.00 for furnishing the oath or declaration later than months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492 (e)).		□ 20 □ 30	\$0.00																
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th>CLAIMS</th> <th>NUMBER FILED</th> <th>NUMBER EXTRA</th> <th>RATE</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Total claims</td> <td>13 - 20 =</td> <td>0</td> <td>x \$17.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Independent claims</td> <td>3 - 3 =</td> <td>0</td> <td>x \$78.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Multiple Dependent Claims (check if applicable).</td> <td style="text-align: right;">□</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$0.00</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		CLAIMS	NUMBER FILED	NUMBER EXTRA	RATE	Total claims	13 - 20 =	0	x \$17.00	Independent claims	3 - 3 =	0	x \$78.00	Multiple Dependent Claims (check if applicable).		□	\$0.00	TOTAL OF ABOVE CALCULATIONS = \$840.00	
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Reduction of 1/2 for filing by small entity, if applicable. Verified Small Entity Statement must also be filed (Note 37 CFR 1.9, 1.27, 1.28) (check if applicable).		□	\$0.00																
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TOTAL NATIONAL FEE =		\$840.00																	
Fee for recording the enclosed assignment (37 CFR 1.21(h)). The assignment must be accompanied by an appropriate cover sheet (37 CFR 3.28, 3.31) (check if applicable).		□	\$0.00																
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NOTE: Where an appropriate time limit under 37 CFR 1.494 or 1.495 has not been met, a petition to revive (37 CFR 1.137(a) or (b)) must be filed and granted to restore the application to pending status.

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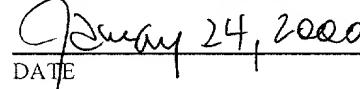
SIGNATURE

C. Irvin McClelland

NAME

21,124

REGISTRATION NUMBER



DATE

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430 Rec'd PCT/PTO 24 JAN 2000

DESCRIPTION

PANEL FOR AIRBAG AND ITS PRODUCING METHOD

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates to a panel for an airbag of an automobile forming an airbag cover (a cover body) made of a synthetic resin in a main body made of another synthetic resin such as an instrument panel and a door trim, and relates to its producing method.

BACKGROUND ART

An airbag arranged in front of a front passenger seat of an automobile is stored on a rear side of the main body such as an instrument panel and a door trim. When the airbag is operated, the airbag cover (cover body) mounted to the instrument panel is opened and the airbag is swollen out in front of the instrument panel.

As shown in Fig. 51, an airbag cover 92 and an instrument panel main body 91 are formed as separate members and the airbag cover 92 is fixed to the instrument panel main body 91 by an unillustrated fixture. The airbag is swollen out in front of the instrument panel by rupturing a weak portion such as a thin wall portion formed in advance in the airbag cover 92.

However, in the panel for the airbag having the structure, each of the instrument panel main body 91 and the airbag cover

92 are made in separate processes. Accordingly, a certain number of producing works are required with respect to each of the instrument panel main body 91 and the airbag cover 92. Further, it is necessary to perform an assembly work for integrating both the members 91 and 92 with each other and arrange a fixture. Accordingly, a problem exists in that entire producing cost of the airbag is increased.

This problem is similarly caused when a door trim instead of the instrument panel is set to a main body and the airbag cover is formed therein.

In consideration of such conventional problems, the present invention provides a panel for an airbag for an automobile easily and produced at a low cost, and provides its production method.

DISCLOSURE OF THE INVENTION

The invention described in claim 1 is a panel for an airbag of an automobile formed by integrally molding a cover body made of a synthetic resin with a main body made of another synthetic resin, the panel comprising:

a joint portion joined with the cover body provided around an opening portion formed in the main body,

wherein the joint portion constitutes an overlapping portion in which an outer peripheral edge of the cover body is overlapped as being arranged on the inner side of an opening

edge of the main body.

In this invention, the overlapping portion is arranged around the opening portion (an airbag swelling-out portion) of the main body such as the instrument panel, in which an outer peripheral edge of the cover body (airbag cover) is overlapped as being arranged on the inner side of an opening edge of the main body. Therefore, neither fixture for connecting both the members nor connecting work are required. Thus, in accordance with the present invention, the number of producing works and cost can be greatly reduced compared with a conventional product in which the cover body and the main body such as the instrument panel are separately formed.

As in the invention described in claim 2, it is preferable that the synthetic resin of the main body is a hard synthetic resin and the synthetic resin of the cover body is a soft one. In this case, a rupturing operation of the cover body in swelling-out of the airbag can be smoothly performed by the soft synthetic resin, and the main body such as the instrument panel can maintain an excellent rigidity by the hard synthetic resin.

As a particular means for improving joining strength of both the members in the overlapping portion, for example, it is preferable that a concavo-convex portion having a serrate shape or a downward convex shape is formed on a lower face of the main body in the overlapping portion as in an invention described in claim 3. This constitution utilizes a so-called

anchor effect yielded from biting a part of the synthetic resin of the cover body into a concave portion of the concavo-convex portion of the main body at a molding time of the cover body. The joining strength of both the members is improved by this anchor effect.

Further, distortion can be prevented at a molding time of a peripheral edge of the opening portion of the main body. Namely, when the cover body is molded after molding the main body, the concavo-convex portion of the overlapping portion becomes resistance to injection force of a material for molding the cover body. Therefore, no peripheral edge of the opening portion of the main body is distorted due to the injection force which pushes the overlapping portion of the main body.

As another particular means, for example, as in an invention described in claim 4, it is preferable that the main body and the cover body are joined in the overlapping portion by high frequency induction heating and vibration melt-bonding. This construction improves the joining strength of the cover body to a joint portion of the main body by applying high frequency induction heating or vibration.

In each of the above two means, the joining strength of the main body and the cover body can be improved by an easy method and a simple structure.

Further, as in an invention described in claim 5, it is preferable that a groove portion having a closed curve shape is formed in a boundary portion of an end portion of the opening

portion of the main body in the cover body, and a thin wall portion which ruptures and a non-thin wall portion which does not rupture at operating time of the airbag are formed along this groove portion in the cover body in a single line shape or a shape of plural continuous lines.

In this case, in a portion continuously connected to the groove portion, it is possible to easily form the thin wall portion thinner than the thicknesses of wall portions in the other portions. The thin wall portion ruptures earlier than peripheral portions when pressure is applied to this thin wall portion, and thus the thin wall portion practically becomes a rupturing portion of the cover body when the airbag is operated.

The boundary portion of the cover body and the main body can be easily observed because of the groove portion, and an excellent appearance in design may be also given depending on a shape of groove shape.

When the thin wall portion ruptures and the cover body is opened, it is preferable that the shape of a line forming the thin wall portion and the shape of a line forming the non-thin wall portion are set onto the cover body such that the non-thin wall portion becomes a rotating central axis of an opening movement of the opening portion of the cover body.

In this case, when the airbag is operated and the thin wall portion ruptures, turning moment with the non-thin wall portion as a rotating center is applied to a ruptured cover

portion and the cover body is easily opened. Accordingly, resistance to swelling-out of the airbag is reduced and the airbag can be easily swollen out.

For example, a combination of the shape of the line forming the thin wall portion and the shape of the line forming the non-thin wall portion so as to set the non-thin wall portion to the rotating central axis of the opening movement of the opening portion of the cover body as mentioned above is constructed as described in claims 6 to 11 mentioned below.

For example, as in an invention described in claim 6, the non-thin wall portion is formed into a shape of one transversal line on an upper or lower side of the cover body, and the thin wall portion is formed in a U-shape (a quadrilateral shape with one side opened) along a groove portion in three directions except for the line forming the non-thin wall portion (see Fig. 2). Thus, a cover portion having the quadrilateral shape with one side opened is easily opened with the non-thin wall portion of the line shape as a rotating center.

Further, as in an invention described in claim 7, the non-thin wall portion is formed into a shape of one transversal line on an upper or lower side of the cover body and the thin wall portion is formed along an entire periphery of the groove portion such that a line forming the non-thin wall portion is included in an inner side (see Fig. 9).

In this case, as described later, it is preferable that the cover body is connected to an airbag case through a rib.

Although the thin wall portion is formed into a shape of a closed curve, the cover is not scattered as being released from restriction when the airbag is operated even when the thin wall portion having the closed curve shape is entirely ruptured throughout its periphery, since the cover body is connected to the airbag case through the rib.

With respect to advantages of this construction, the thin wall portion of the closed curve shape is entirely ruptured throughout its periphery, and the cover body is separated from the main body as the cover body is connected to the airbag case through the rib. Accordingly, no stress is applied to the main body by the operation of the airbag in its operation. Further, there are no situations in which the main body is ruptured and a ruptured portion is possibly scattered.

As in an invention described in claim 8, the non-thin wall portion can be formed into a shape of one transversal line on each of upper and lower sides of the cover body, and the thin wall portion can be formed into a shape of one longitudinal line on each of left-hand and right-hand sides of the cover body. A second thin wall portion which is not formed along a groove portion is formed into a shape of one transversal line in a central portion of the cover body. The entire of the first and second thin wall portions can be formed in an H-shape (see Fig. 10).

In this case, the second thin wall portion provided at the center of the cover is ruptured and the cover is opened

in two directions so that resistance of the cover to swelling-out of the airbag is further reduced.

As in an invention described in claim 9, the non-thin wall portion is formed into a shape of one transversal line on each of upper and lower sides of the cover body, and the thin wall portion can be formed along an entire periphery of a groove portion such that a line forming the non-thin wall portion is included in an inner side. Further, a second thin wall portion which is not formed along the groove portion is formed into a shape of one transversal line in a central portion of the cover body. The entire of the first and second thin wall portions can be formed in a shape in which two quadrilaterals are lined up (see Fig. 14).

As a result, effects similar to those in the invention described in claim 7 can be obtained. Further, since the second thin wall portion formed at the center of the cover is ruptured, resistance to swelling-out of the airbag is further reduced. In this case, as described later, it is preferable that the cover body is connected to the airbag case through the rib. Thus, the cover can be prevented from scattering when the airbag is operated.

Further, as in an invention described in claim 10, the non-thin wall portion can be formed into a shape of one longitudinal line on each of left-hand and right-hand sides of the cover body, and the thin wall portion can be formed into a shape of one transversal line on each of upper and lower sides

of the cover body. A second thin wall portion which is not formed along a groove portion is formed into a shape of one longitudinal line in a central portion of the cover. The entire of the first and second thin wall portions can be formed in an H-shape (see Fig. 15).

As a result, operating effects similar to those in the invention described in claim 8 can be obtained.

Further, as described in claim 11, the non-thin wall portion can be formed into a shape of one longitudinal line on each of left-hand and right-hand sides of the cover body, and the thin wall portion can be formed along an entire periphery of a groove portion such that a line forming the non-thin portion is included with an inner side. Further, a second thin wall portion is not formed along the groove portion but is formed into a shape of one longitudinal line in a central portion of the cover body. The entire of the first and second thin wall portions can be formed in a shape in which two quadrilaterals are lined up (see Fig. 17).

As a result, operating effects similar to those in the invention described in claim 7 can be obtained. In this case, as described later, it is also preferable that a rib for a connection with the airbag case is arranged in the cover body.

Namely, as described in claim 12, it is preferable that the rib is projected in the non-thin wall portion and connected to the airbag case through a connecting member.

Since the rib is arranged, a portion near this rib is

reinforced and the non-thin wall portion having the rib can be reliably set to a rotating center of an opening movement when the cover body opens.

Further, since the rib is connected to the airbag case through the connecting member, it is possible to reliably prevent the cover body from being separated from the airbag case and scattered when the airbag is operated.

Next, as in an invention described in claim 13, it is preferable that an opening edge of the opening portion of the main body is mechanically connected to an outer peripheral edge of the cover body. This mechanical connection, for example, can be achieved by means of caulking and a fitting portion.

In this case, since the main body and the cover body are mechanically connected to each other by for example caulking, there are no restrictions in which compatibility is required in a synthetic resin material used in the main body and the cover body compared with the conventional connection using such as melt-bonding. Accordingly, it is possible to widely select a material satisfying physical properties and such required with respect to both the main body and the cover body.

Next, an invention described in claim 14 resides in a panel for an airbag including:

a cover body comprising a first synthetic resin material;
a main body comprising a second synthetic resin material compatible with the first synthetic resin material, formed by two-color molding after forming the cover body; and

a deformation restricting portion provided at the outer peripheral edge of the cover body and engaged with a mold face, wherein the main body comprises an opening portion which is closed by the cover body; and

wherein the deformation restricting portion restricts deformation of the cover body caused by a molding pressure which acts at a molding time of the main body.

When the main body is two-color molded with the cover body in a semisolid state within the mold, a large molding pressure acts to the outer peripheral edge of the cover body. In this case, since the cover body is engaged with the mold face by the deformation restricting portion, no cover body is deformed even when the molding pressure acts to the cover body. This is particularly effective when a soft material is used as a material of the cover body.

Further, as in an invention described in claim 15, it is preferable that the deformation restricting portion is constituted of a convex strip having an angular cross section or a concave groove.

In this case, the cover body and the mold can be easily engaged with each other by the convex strip or the concave groove of the cover body, and a concave groove or a convex strip formed on the mold face and corresponding to the convex strip or the concave groove of the cover body. Therefore, it is possible to reliably prevent the outer peripheral edge of the cover body from being retreated, deformed or the like.

Further, an invention described in claim 16 resides in a panel for an airbag including:

a main body which has an opening portion comprising a first synthetic resin material;

a cover body comprising a second synthetic resin material compatible with the first synthetic resin material, formed by two-color molding after forming the main body; and

a deformation restricting portion provided at the periphery of the opening portion and engaged with a mold face,

wherein the opening portion of the main body comprises is closed by the cover body; and

wherein the deformation restricting portion restricts deformation of the cover body caused by a molding pressure which acts at a molding time of the main body.

In this case, when the cover body for closing a swelling-out port of the airbag is molded by two-color molding within this swelling-out port with respect to the main body in a semisolid state inside of the mold, a large molding pressure acts to a main body portion at a peripheral edge of the airbag swelling-out port. Here, since the main body is engaged with the mold face by the deformation restricting portion, the main body is not deformed even when the molding pressure acts thereto. Accordingly, there is no problem that a shape of the peripheral edge of the airbag swelling-out port is shifted from its predetermined shape and becomes wavy.

Further, as in an invention described in claim 17, it

is preferable that the deformation restricting portion is a convex strip having an angular cross section or a concave groove.

Also in this case, the main body and the mold can be easily engaged with each other by the convex strip or the concave groove of the main body, and a concave groove or a convex strip formed on the mold face and corresponding to the convex strip or the concave groove of the main body. Therefore, deformation of the main body such as wavy deformation can be reliably prevented.

Next, an invention described in claim 18 resides in a panel for an airbag of an automobile formed by integrally molding a cover body made of a synthetic resin with a main body made of another synthetic resin and providing a thin wall portion which ruptures when the airbag is operated:

wherein the main body and the cover body are integrally molded by one-color molding;

wherein a crack preventing layer is provided on a rear surface of a general portion which is a portion except for the thin wall portion of the cover body ; and

wherein the crack preventing layer prevents cracks of the general portion.

For example, the crack preventing layer can be achieved by joining a net made of polyamide (PA) and such with the rear face of the cover body in insert molding.

In this case, the main body and the cover body for closing an opening portion of this main body are integrally molded by

one-color molding and are produced by the synthetic resin material, there is no discontinuity caused by the difference between materials in a boundary portion of the main body and the cover body so that an external appearance of the panel is improved. Further, since the main body and the cover body are integrally molded by one-color molding, producing and assembly works are reduced.

Further, since the crack preventing layer is formed on the rear face of the general portion of the cover body, no general portion of the cover body formed by the synthetic resin material is cracked as broken pieces when the airbag inflates.

Further, as in an invention described in claim 19, it is preferable that a rib is projected in the cover body on the rear face of a portion in which no thin wall portion is formed. It is also preferable that a connecting member made of a metal and extending from a side of the main body is connected to the rib, and a projection is formed on a surface of this connecting member and is bitten into a surface of the rib when the connecting member is connected to the rib.

In this case, the thin wall portion is ruptured as the airbag inflates. Accordingly, the cover body is rotated and opened into a cabin with a portion near a root of the rib as a hinge center. At this time, upward pulling-up force is applied to the cover body. However, since the projection of the connecting member and the rib of the cover body are connected to each other such that this projection is bitten into the rib,

no cover body is separated from the connecting member so that scattering of the cover body is reliably prevented.

Next, for example, there is the following invention of a method for producing the panel for the airbag.

Namely, as in an invention described in claim 20, there is a method for producing a panel for an airbag of an automobile formed by integrally molding a cover body made of a synthetic resin with a main body made of another synthetic resin, the method comprising:

preparing a thermoplastic material having compatibility as the synthetic resin forming each of the main body and the cover body;

arranging a movable core in a male or female die as a mold;

interrupting a portion between a first cavity portion for forming a first member and a second cavity portion for forming a second member by allowing the core to project and contact an opposite die;

injecting a material of the first member into the first cavity portion;

forming a communicating portion between the first and second cavity portions by retreating the core; and

injecting a material of the second member into the second cavity portion and the communicating portion so that an overlapping portion of both the first and second members is formed and adhered and both the first and second members are

integrally made.

The key feature of this producing method is that the main body and the cover body are integrally formed by injection molding by the following construction and method.

Namely, the synthetic resins forming both the members are set to be compatible with each other. In the meantime, the movable core is arranged in a male or female die for the injection molding. First, this core is projected and comes in contact with the opposite mold. Thus, the portion between the first and second cavity portions is interrupted, and the material of the first member as a material of either of the main body or the cover body is injected into the first cavity portion such that no first member flows into the second cavity.

In a subsequent second process, the core is retreated so that the first and second cavities are communicated with each other, and the material of the second member is injected into the second cavity portion. Both the members are integrally made by forming an overlapping portion of both the members in the communicating portion of both the cavity portions and adhering the overlapping portion utilizing compatibility of both the materials.

As mentioned above, in this producing method, the main body and the cover body can be made by one injection molding by a two-color molding method so that no fixture for connecting both the members to each other is required and no connecting work is also required. Accordingly, the number of producing

works and cost can be greatly reduced compared with a conventional product in which the main body and the cover body are separately formed.

Further, it is preferable that a projecting portion of a predetermined width is continuously formed along a boundary portion of both the cavities in the opposite mold in a contact portion of the core and the opposite mold. It is also preferable that a groove portion having a closed curve shape of the predetermined width is formed in a boundary portion of the first and second members. It is further preferable that a thin wall portion ruptures at an operating time of the airbag and a non-thin wall portion unbroken at the operating time of the airbag are formed along the groove portion of the cover body in a single continuous line shape or a shape of plural continuous lines.

In this case, the projecting portion projected in a larger extent than its peripheral portion and having a relatively narrow width is formed in the mold opposed to the core so that the groove portion having a closed curve shape can be easily formed. In a position continuously connected to the groove portion, a thin wall portion thinner than the thicknesses of wall portions in other positions can be easily formed by forming the groove portion. Since the thin wall portion is ruptured earlier than its peripheral portion when pressure is applied to the thin wall portion, this thin wall portion becomes a ruptured portion of the cover body when the airbag is operated.

The boundary portion of the cover body and the main body (first and second members) can be easily observed by the groove portion. Further, an excellent appearance in design can be also given depending on a groove shape.

When the thin wall portion is ruptured and the cover body is opened, it is preferable that the shape of a line forming the thin wall portion and the shape of a line forming the non-thin wall portion are set onto the cover body such that the non-thin wall portion becomes a rotating central axis of an opening movement of the opening portion of the cover body.

In this case, when the airbag is operated and the thin wall portion is ruptured, rotating moment with the non-thin wall portion as a rotating center is applied to a broken cover portion and the cover body is easily opened. Accordingly, resistance to swelling-out of the airbag is reduced and the airbag can be easily swollen out.

A combination of thermoplastic material having compatibility is constructed by a combination of polypropylene resin forming the main body and olefin elastomer (TPO) forming the cover body and the like.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Fig. 1 is a sectional view of a panel for an airbag according to Embodiment 1 (a sectional view taken along a line X1-X1 of Fig. 2).

Fig. 2 is a perspective view of the panel for an airbag

according to Embodiment 1.

Figs. 3A to 3C are arrangement plan views of a mold in a process of molding the panel for an airbag according to Embodiment 1.

Fig. 4 is an enlarged view of the periphery of a thin wall portion of Fig. 1.

Fig. 5 is an enlarged view of the periphery of a non-thin wall portion of Fig. 1.

Fig. 6 is a sectional view of a panel for an airbag according to Embodiment 2 (a sectional view taken along a line X1-X1 of Fig. 2).

Figs. 7A to 7C are arrangement plan views of a mold in a process of molding the panel for an airbag according to Embodiment 2.

Fig. 8 is an enlarged view of the periphery of a non-thin wall portion according to Embodiment 3.

Fig. 9 is a perspective view of panel for an airbag according to Embodiment 4.

Fig. 10 is a perspective view of an panel for an airbag according to Embodiment 5.

Fig. 11 is a sectional view taken along a line X2-X2 of Fig. 10.

Fig. 12 is a perspective view of a panel for an airbag according to Embodiment 6.

Fig. 13 is a sectional view taken along a line X3-X3 of Fig. 12.

Fig. 14 is a perspective view of a panel for an airbag according to Embodiment 8.

Fig. 15 is a perspective view of a panel for an airbag according to Embodiment 9.

Fig. 16 is a sectional view taken along a line Y1-Y1 of Fig. 15.

Fig. 17 is an enlarged view of the periphery of a thin wall portion of a panel for an airbag according to Embodiment 12.

Fig. 18 is an enlarged view of the periphery of a thin wall portion of a panel for an airbag according to Embodiment 13.

Fig. 19 is an enlarged view of the periphery of a thin wall portion of a panel for an airbag according to Embodiment 14.

Fig. 20 is a perspective view of a panel for an airbag according to Embodiment 15.

Fig. 21 is a perspective view of a panel for an airbag according to Embodiment 16.

Fig. 22 is a sectional view taken along a line X4-X4 of Fig. 21.

Fig. 23 is a sectional view of a mold in molding the panel for an airbag according to Embodiment 16.

Fig. 24 is a sectional view of a mold in molding a cover body according to Embodiment 16.

Fig. 25 is a sectional view of the periphery of a cover

body according to Embodiment 17.

Fig. 26 is a sectional view of the periphery of a cover body according to Embodiment 18.

Fig. 27 is a perspective view of a panel for an airbag according to Embodiment 20.

Fig. 28 is a sectional view taken along a line X5-X5 of Fig. 27.

Fig. 29 is a sectional view of a mold in molding a cover body according to Embodiment 20.

Fig. 30 is a sectional view of a mold in molding the panel for an airbag according to Embodiment 20.

Fig. 31 is a sectional view of a substantial part of the mold in molding the panel for an airbag according to Embodiment 20.

Fig. 32 is a sectional view of a substantial part of the mold in molding the panel for an airbag according to Embodiment 20.

Fig. 33 is a perspective view of a panel for an airbag according to Embodiment 22.

Fig. 34 is a sectional view taken along a line X6-X6 of Fig. 33.

Fig. 35 is a sectional view of a mold in molding the panel for an airbag according to Embodiment 22.

Fig. 36 is a sectional view of a mold in molding a cover body according to Embodiment 22.

Fig. 37 is a sectional view of a substantial part of the

mold in molding the panel for an airbag according to Embodiment 22.

Fig. 38 is a sectional view of a substantial part of a mold in molding a panel for an airbag according to Embodiment 23.

Fig. 39 is a perspective view of a panel for an airbag according to Embodiment 25.

Fig. 40 is a sectional view taken along a line X7-X7 of Fig. 39.

Fig. 41 is a sectional view of a mold in molding the panel for an airbag according to Embodiment 25.

Fig. 42 is a perspective view of a panel for an airbag according to Embodiment 26.

Fig. 43 is a sectional view taken along a line X8-X8 of Fig. 42.

Fig. 44 is an exploded perspective view of a joint portion of a rib and a bracket according to Embodiment 26.

Fig. 45 is a plan view of the bracket according to Embodiment 26.

Fig. 46 is a sectional view taken along a line V-V of Fig. 45.

Fig. 47 is an enlarged plan view of a protrusion-forming portion according to Embodiment 26.

Fig. 48 is a sectional view taken along a line VII-VII of Fig. 47.

Fig. 49 is a partial enlarged plan view of a bracket

according to Embodiment 27.

Fig. 50 is a partial enlarged plan view of another bracket according to Embodiment 27.

Fig. 51 is a perspective view of a panel for an airbag in a conventional art.

PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION

Embodiment 1

In this embodiment, as shown in Figs. 1 and 2, a panel 1 for an airbag of an automobile is constituted such that an airbag cover (cover body) 20 made of olefin elastomer (TPO) is integrally molded with a main body 10 constructed by an instrument panel made of polypropylene resin (PP) as a hard synthetic resin.

A joint portion joined with the cover body 20 is formed around an opening portion 12 formed in the main body 10. This joint portion constitutes an overlapping portion 15 in which an outer peripheral edge 205 of the cover body 20 is arranged on an inner side of an opening edge 105 of the main body 10 and is overlapped with this opening edge 105.

Explanations of each of these constructional elements will next be supplemented.

As shown in Fig. 1, the panel 1 for an airbag in this example stores an airbag 81 therein and is arranged on a front passenger seat side of an automobile. The panel 1 is

constituted of a main body 10 formed by an instrument panel and a cover body (airbag cover) 20. A thin wall portion 23 is formed in the cover body 20 along a groove portion 21 and is ruptured at an operating time of the airbag 81. As shown by a line S1 of Fig. 2, a connecting shape of the thin wall portion 23 is a quadrilateral shape with one side opened.

The main body 10 and the cover body 20 are integrally formed as follows by two-color molding using polypropylene resin and olefin elastomer. Both the two kinds of synthetic resins are thermoplastic and have compatibility (a consolute property).

First, as shown in Fig. 3A, a core 32 is projected and comes in contact with a projecting portion 351 of an opposite mold 35. The clearance between a first cavity portion 41 and a second cavity portion 45 is interrupted so that no polypropylene resin as a material of a first member forming the main body 10 flows into the second cavity portion 45. Next, the polypropylene resin forming the main body 10 is injected into the first cavity portion 41.

Thereafter, as shown in Fig. 3B, the core 32 is retreated in a subsequent second process so that the first cavity portion 41 and the second cavity portion 45 are communicated with each other. Then, the olefin elastomer as a material of a second member forming the cover body 20 is injected into the second cavity portion 45 so that an overlapping portion 15 of both the members 10 and 20 is formed in a communicating portion of

both the cavity portions 41 and 45. Both the members 10 and 20 are integrally made by adhering these members to each other by utilizing compatibility of both the materials.

Finally, as shown in Fig. 3C, movable molds 35 and 36 are separated from each other so that a molded article (the panel 1 for the airbag) is taken out. Thereafter, processing such as painting is performed as necessity requires.

Therefore, in this embodiment, the main body 10 formed by the instrument panel and the cover body 20 can be made by a continuous one-time injection molding process. Hence, no fixture for connecting both the members as in a conventional case nor connecting work of both the members are required. Accordingly, the number of producing works and cost can be greatly reduced compared with a conventional article.

Further, in this example, as shown in Figs. 3A to 3C, a projecting portion 351 of the width W is continuously formed in the opposite mold 35 along a boundary portion of both the cavity portions 41 and 45. Further, a continuous projecting portion 311 is formed along a line S1 in a predetermined end portion of a fixing mold 31. As a result, as shown in Figs. 4 and 5, a groove portion 21 of the width W formed in the shape of a closed curve is formed in a boundary portion of the cover body 20 and the main body 10. The thin wall portion 23 ruptured when the airbag 81 operates and a non-thin wall portion 24 not ruptured when the airbag 81 are formed into shapes of continuous lines S1 and R1 (Fig. 2) along the groove portion 21.

As mentioned above, the groove portion 21 (Fig. 2) having the closed curve shape can be easily formed by forming the projecting portion 351 located in a peripheral portion of the opposite mold 35 and projected from this peripheral portion and having the relatively narrow width W. Further, the projecting portion 311 is formed in the fixing mold 31 and is opposed to the groove portion 21. Accordingly, in a position adjacent to the groove portion 21, the thin wall portion 23 thinner than wall portions in the other positions can be formed simultaneously with the molding. The thin wall portion 23 is easily ruptured when pressure caused by swelling-out of the airbag 81 is applied to this thin wall portion 23. Therefore, the thin wall portion 23 becomes a ruptured portion when the airbag 81 operates.

The non-thin wall portion 24 is formed into a shape of one transversal line on an upper side of the cover body 20. The thin wall portion 23 (thickness T) is formed into a quadrilateral shape with one side opened along the groove portion 21 in three directions except for the line R1 forming the non-thin wall portion 24 as indicated by the line S1 (see Fig. 2). Therefore, a cover portion ruptured in the opening shape on one side of the quadrilateral is easily opened with the linear non-thin wall portion 24 as a rotating center.

As shown in Fig. 2, the boundary portion of the cover body 20 and the main body 10 can be easily observed by forming the groove portion 21. Further, an excellent appearance in

design can be obtained depending on a shape of the groove portion 21.

Embodiment 2

In this embodiment, as shown in Fig. 6, a rib 25 is projected in the non-thin wall portion 24 in Embodiment 1, and is connected to an airbag case 82 with a connecting member.

Namely, the rib 25 projected onto a rear side of the cover body 20 is supported by a metallic retainer 251 having a bead for preventing falling-out on its surface. This rib 25 is fixed to a bracket 811 of the airbag case 82 with a bolt 252 and a nut 253.

In this figure, reference numeral 255 designates a fixture for fixing the bracket 812 of the airbag case 82 to the main body 10.

In an injection molding process of the panel, a concave portion 331 is formed in the fixing mold 33 as shown in Fig. 7 so that the rib 25 is formed.

The panel 1 for the airbag in this embodiment is reinforced by the rib 25. A root portion of the non-thin wall portion 24 having the rib 25 becomes a rotating center of an opening movement of the cover body 20 at its opening time. Namely, when the thin wall portion 23 is ruptured, a ruptured portion formed into a quadrilateral shape with one side opened of the cover body 20 is rotated and opened with a root C (Fig. 6) of the rib 25 as a rotating center.

The rib 25 is tightly fixed to the bracket 811 of the airbag case 82 the connecting member. Accordingly, when the cover body 20 is separated from the main body 10 at the operating time of the airbag 81, the cover body 20 is neither shifted from the airbag case 82 nor is scattered.

The other elements are similar to those of Embodiment 1.

Embodiment 3

In this embodiment, as shown in Fig. 8, a minimum thickness T1 of the non-thin wall portion 24 is set to be 1.5 times or more a thickness T2 of the cover body 20 in Embodiment 2.

The minimum thickness T1 is increased as mentioned above to reinforce the non-thin wall portion. Accordingly, if the retainer 251 is dislocated from the bracket 811 by the operation of the airbag 81, the non-thin wall portion 24 as a rotating center of the opening movement of the cover body 20 is hardly ruptured. Therefore, it is possible to obtain a panel 1 for the airbag with higher safety.

The other elements are similar to those of Embodiment 2.

Embodiment 4

In this embodiment, the non-thin wall portion 24 is formed into a shape of one transversal line on an upper side of the

cover body 20 in Embodiments 2 and 3. Further, as shown in Fig. 9, the thin wall portion 23 is formed along the entire periphery of the groove portion 21 as shown by a closed curve S2 such that a line R1 forming the non-thin wall portion 24 is included in an inner side.

The thin wall portion 23 is formed in a shape of the closed curve S2, but no cover body 20 is connected to the airbag case 82 through the rib 25. Accordingly, when the thin wall portion 23 formed on the closed curve S2 is entirely ruptured throughout the entire periphery and is separated from the main body 10, the cover body 20 is neither separated nor scattered when the airbag is operated.

In addition, the cover body 20 is separated from the main body 10 by entirely rupturing the thin wall portion 23 formed on the closed along its entire periphery and this leads to the following advantages. Namely, no tensile stress is applied to the main body 10 by the cover body 20 when the airbag is operated. Accordingly, situations hardly occur in which the main body 10 is damaged by stress caused by operating the airbag and is partially damaged and scattered in a certain case. Therefore, safety of the airbag is greatly improved.

The other elements are similar to those of Embodiments 2 and 3.

Embodiment 5

In this embodiment, as shown in Figs. 10 and 11, the

non-thin wall portion 24 having the rib 25 in Embodiment 2 is formed in the shapes of transversal one lines R1 and R2 on upper and lower sides of the cover body 20, respectively. As shown in Fig. 10, the thin wall portion 23 is formed in the shapes of longitudinal one lines S31 and S32 on the left-hand and the right-hand sides of the cover body 20, respectively. Further, a second thin wall portion 26 (Fig. 11) which is not formed along the groove portion 21 is formed in the shape of a transversal one line S33 in a central portion of the cover body 20. The first and second thin wall portions 23 and 26 are entirely formed in an H-shape.

In this embodiment, the central second thin wall portion 26 is ruptured when the airbag is operated. An opening portion of the cover body 20 is easily opened on the left-hand and the right-hand sides in Fig. 11 with the non-thin wall portion 24 of the transversal one lines R1 and R2 as a rotating center.

The other elements are similar to those of Embodiment 2.

Embodiment 6

In this embodiment, as shown in Figs. 12 and 13, no rib 25 is formed in Embodiment 5.

Since no rib 25 is formed, the airbag can be produced at a lower cost compared with Embodiment 5. However, since no rib 25 is provided, strength or other properties of the airbag are relatively inferior to those in Embodiment 5.

The other elements are similar to those of Embodiment 5.

Embodiment 7

In this embodiment, as shown in Fig. 8, a minimum thickness T1 of the non-thin wall portion 24 is set to be 1.5 times or more a thickness T2 of the cover body 20 in Embodiment 5.

The minimum thickness T1 is increased as mentioned above to reinforce the non-thin wall portion. Accordingly, if the retainer 251 is dislocated from the bracket 811 by the operation of the airbag 81, the non-thin wall portion 24 as a rotating center of the opening movement of the cover body 20 is hardly ruptured. Therefore, it is possible to obtain a panel 1 for the airbag with excellent safety.

The other elements are similar to those of Embodiment 5.

Embodiment 8

In this embodiment, as shown in Fig. 14, the thin wall portion 23 is formed on transversal one lines S34 and S35 on upper and lower sides of the cover body 20 in Embodiment 5. The first and second thin wall portions 23 and 26 are entirely formed in a shape in which two quadrilaterals are lined up.

In this embodiment, the thin wall portion 23 formed on a closed curve is entirely ruptured throughout the entire

periphery so that the cover body 20 is separated from the main body 10 at the operating time of the airbag.

As a result, no tensile stress from the cover body 20 is applied to the main body 10 at the operating time of the airbag. Accordingly, situations hardly occur in which the main body 10 is damaged by stress caused by operating the airbag and is partially damaged and scattered in a certain case. Therefore, safety of the airbag is improved.

The other elements are similar to those of Embodiment 5.

Embodiment 9

In this embodiment, as shown in Figs. 15 and 16, the non-thin wall portion 24 in Embodiment 2 is formed in the shapes of longitudinal one line R3 and R4 on the left-hand and the right-hand sides of the cover body 20, respectively. The thin wall portion 23 is formed in the shapes of transversal one lines S34 and S35 on upper and lower sides of the cover body 20, respectively. Further, a second thin wall portion 26 which is not formed along the groove portion 21 is formed in the shape of a longitudinal one line S36 in a central portion of the cover body 20. The first and second thin wall portions 23 and 26 are entirely formed in an H-shape.

In this embodiment, the central second thin wall portion 26 is ruptured when the airbag is operated. An opening portion of the cover body 20 is easily opened on the left-hand and the

right-hand sides in Fig. 11 with the non-thin wall portion 24 as a rotating center.

The other elements are similar to those of Embodiment 2.

Embodiment 10

In this embodiment, no rib 25 is formed in Embodiment 9.

Since no rib 25 is formed, the airbag can be produced at a lower cost compared with Embodiment 9. However, since no rib 25 is provided, strength or other properties of the airbag are relatively inferior to those in an airbag with the rib.

The other elements are similar to those of Embodiment 9.

Embodiment 11

In this embodiment, as shown in Fig. 8, a minimum thickness T1 of the non-thin wall portion 24 is set to be 1.5 times or more a thickness T2 of the cover body 20 in Embodiment 9.

The minimum thickness T1 is increased as mentioned above to reinforce the non-thin wall portion. Accordingly, if the retainer 251 is dislocated from the bracket 811 by the operation of the airbag 81, the non-thin wall portion 24 as a rotating center of the opening movement of the cover body 20 is hardly ruptured. Therefore, it is possible to obtain a panel 1 for

the airbag with excellent safety.

The other elements are similar to those of Embodiment 9.

Embodiment 12

In this embodiment, as shown in Fig. 17, the thin wall portion 23 is formed on longitudinal one lines S31 and S32 on the right-hand and the left-hand sides of the cover body 20 in Embodiment 9. The first and second thin wall portions 23 and 26 are entirely formed in a shape in which two quadrilaterals are lined up.

In this embodiment, the thin wall portion 23 formed on a closed curve is entirely ruptured throughout the entire periphery so that the cover body 20 is separated from the main body 10 at the operating time of the airbag.

As a result, tensile stress from the cover body 20 does not act to the main body 10 at the operating time of the airbag. Accordingly, danger hardly occurs that the main body 10 is damaged by stress caused by operating the airbag and is partially damaged and scattered in a certain case. Therefore, safety of the airbag is improved.

The other elements are similar to those in Embodiment 9.

Embodiment 13

In this embodiment, as shown in Fig. 18, a concavo-convex

portion 159 is formed in a sawtooth shape on a lower face of the main body 10 in an overlapping portion 15.

This concavo-convex portion 159 is formed in a non-thin wall portion as well as in the thin wall portion 23.

This concavo-convex portion 159 is formed by using a core 32 imparted a concavo-convex shape which is used in molding and then molding the main body 10 and the cover body 20 by two-color molding by using this core 32 similarly to Embodiment 1.

The thin wall portion t has 0.8 mm in thickness.

The other elements are similar to those of Embodiment 1.

In this embodiment, the concavo-convex portion 159 having the sawtooth shape is formed in the overlapping portion 15 of the main body 10. Therefore, both the members are tightly joined because of an anchor effect of the cover body 20 in this concavo-convex portion 159. Accordingly, the cover body 20 is neither dislocated from the main body 10 nor scattered when the airbag is operated.

In this embodiment, effects similar to those of Embodiment 1 can be also obtained.

Embodiment 14

In this embodiment, as shown in Fig. 19, a concavo-convex portion 158 is formed in a downward convex shape on a lower face of the main body 10 in an overlapping portion 15.

The other elements are similar to those of Embodiment 13.

In this embodiment, similarly to the Embodiment 13, the anchor effect is improved by the concavo-convex portion 158 in the overlapping portion 15 so that joining strength of the cover body 20 to the main body 10 is improved.

In this embodiment, effects similar to those of Embodiment 1 can be also obtained.

Embodiment 15

As shown in Fig. 20, a panel for an airbag in this embodiment has a melt-bonded portion 157 formed in an overlapping portion 15 such that the main body 10 and the cover body 20 are joined by high frequency induction heating or vibrational melt-bonding.

The other elements are similar to those of Embodiment 13.

In this embodiment, the melt-bonded portion 157 is formed by joining both the members 10 and 20 by the high frequency induction heating or the vibrational melt-bonding. Therefore, joining strength of both the members is improved.

In this embodiment, effects similar to those in the Embodiment 13 can be also obtained.

Embodiment 16

Fig. 21 shows an enlarged perspective view of a forward

passenger seat side part of an instrument panel as an example of the panel 1 for an airbag. The instrument panel is formed by a hard synthetic resin material such as polypropylene (PP) mixed with rubber and a filler. An opening portion 12 as an airbag swelling-out port having a substantially rectangular shape is formed on an upper face of a main body 10 of this instrument panel in its central position in a back and forth direction (a slanting vertical direction in Fig. 21) of the main body 10. This opening portion 12 is closed by a cover body 20 molded by two-color molding described later and constructed by a PC (polycarbonate)/ABS(acrylonitrile butadiene styrene) alloy incompatible with PP. Fig. 22 shows a cross section of this opening portion 12.

In Fig. 22, an outer peripheral edge 205 of the cover body 20 is bent along the lower face of an opening edge 105 of the opening portion 12 of the main body 10, and is caulked and fixed by bosses 14 projected on this lower face. Namely, as shown in Fig. 21, many bosses 14 are spaced from each other on the lower face of the opening edge 105 of the main body 10 and are formed in a peripheral shape. These bosses 14 downward extend through the outer peripheral edge 205 of the cover body 20, and their end tips are crushed by heat so that a caulking state is formed. Thus, the cover body 20 is tightly connected to the main body 10.

An outer peripheral surface of the cover body 20 is stepwise lowered in its entire periphery so that a groove

portion 21 is formed in a concave shape between this outer peripheral surface and an opening peripheral face of the opening portion 12. A rib 25 is formed on a rear face of the cover body 20 on its front side (a left-hand side of the cover body 20 in Fig. 22). This rib 25 is formed in the shape of a straight line along this rear face of the cover body 20 and is projected slantingly forward. This rib 25 is covered with a metallic retainer 251. The rib 25 is connected to a bracket 811 located behind the cover body 20 by a bolt 252 and a nut 253. An airbag case 82 storing an airbag 81 therein is fixed by the bolt 252 and the nut 253 to an insert material 13 of the main body 10 with the bracket 812.

The rear face of the cover body 20 along its three sides except for the front side is deeply recessed towards the surface, and a thin wall portion 23 to be ruptured when the airbag inflates is formed between this rear face and the groove portion 21 having a concave shape. Accordingly, when the airbag inflates, the thin wall portion 23 (Fig. 21) on the three sides of the cover body 20 is ruptured so that the cover body 20 is opened into a cabin (on an upper side in Fig. 2) with a portion near a root of the rib 25 as a hinge center and the airbag 81 is swollen out of the opening portion 12.

Such a panel 1 for the airbag is produced by two-color molding explained below. Namely, in Fig. 23, a convex strip 52 having the same shape as the groove portion 21 having the concave shape is formed in a slide type opposite mold 51 within

an upper mold 5 in an outer periphery of its molding face. An end face of a slide core 61 within a lower mold 6 comes in press contact with an end face of this convex strip 52, and a cover body molding cavity C1 and a main body molding cavity C2 outside this cavity C1 are separated from each other. Further, many columnar concave portions 62 are spaced from each other in a peripheral shape on an end face of the slide core 61 and extend to the interior of the slide core 61 at a constant depth. These concave portions 62 are communicated with the main body molding cavity C2. A PP material is injected into such a main body molding cavity C2 so that the main body 10 is molded. At this time, the PP material is simultaneously supplied into each of the concave portions 62 so that the above-mentioned bosses 14 are molded.

While the hard synthetic resin material within the main body molding cavity C2 is yet in a semisolid state, the slide core 61 is subsequently retreated by a constant amount as shown in Fig. 24, and the main body molding cavity C2 and the cover body molding cavity C1 are communicated with each other. In this state, a PC/ABS alloy material incompatible with the PP material is injected into the cover body molding cavity C1. The cover body molding cavity C1 is filled with the PC/ABS alloy material. This PC/ABS alloy material also enters a clearance cavity C3 yielded by retreating the slide core 61 and becomes an outer peripheral edge 205 of the cover body 20 so that it fills peripheral portions of the bosses 14. The PC/ABS alloy

material is taken out of the mold in this state, and end tips of the bosses 14 projected from the lower face of the opening edge 105 of the opening portion 12 (Fig. 22) of the main body 10 are crushed and caulked by heat.

Embodiment 17

Fig. 25 shows another example of a connecting structure of the main body 10 and the outer peripheral edge 205 of the cover body 20. In this figure, a convex strip 115 having an angular cross section is formed on the lower face of the opening edge 105 of the opening portion 12 of the main body 10 in its entire periphery. In contrast to this, a concave groove 226 is formed on an upper face of the outer peripheral edge 205 of the cover body 20 integrally molded by two-color molding with the main body 10. The convex strip 115 is fitted into this concave groove 226. A convex strip 225 having the same cross section as the convex strip 115 is formed on a lower face of the outer peripheral edge 205 of the cover body 20 in accordance with a shape of the slide core at a two-color molding time. This convex strip 225 is fitted into a concave groove 813 flexing-formed in a bracket 812 of the airbag case 82 (Fig. 2). Thus, the cover body 20 is supported between the main body 10 and the bracket 812 in a state in which the concave groove 226 and the convex strip 225 of the cover body 20 are respectively fitted to the convex strip 115 of the main body 10 and the concave groove 813 of the bracket 812. In this manner,

the cover body 20 is connected to the main body 10.

Embodiment 18

Fig. 26 shows an even another example of the connecting structure of the main body 10 and the outer peripheral edge 205 of the cover body 20. In this figure, a concave groove 116 having an angular cross section is formed on a lower face of the opening edge 105 of the opening portion 12 of the main body 10 in its entire periphery. In contrast to this, a convex strip 228 is formed on an upper face of the outer peripheral edge 205 of the cover body 20 integrally molded by two-color molding with the main body 10, and is fitted to the concave groove 116. Further, a concave groove 227 having the same cross section as the concave groove 116 is formed on a lower face of the outer peripheral edge 205 of the cover body 20 in accordance with a shape of the slide core for two-color molding. This concave groove 227 is fitted to a convex strip 814 flexing-formed in the bracket 812 of the airbag case 82 (Fig. 2). Thus, the cover body 20 is supported between the main body 10 and the bracket 812 in a state in which the convex strip 228 and the concave groove 227 of the cover body 20 are respectively fitted to the concave groove 116 of the main body 10 and the convex strip 814 of the bracket 812. Accordingly, the cover body 20 is connected to the main body 10.

Embodiment 19

The main body 10 and the cover body 20 are not necessarily molded by the two-color molding. For example, it is possible to adopt a method for molding the cover body 20 with the main body 10 molded in advance as an insert, or a method in which the main body 10 and the cover body 20 are individually molded and assembled. In cases using these methods, a combination of convex strips 115 and 225 and concave grooves 226, 813 in Fig. 25 in Embodiment 17, or a combination of convex strips 228 and 814 and concave grooves 116 and 227 in Fig. 26 in Embodiment 18 can be set to only a combination of either of the projecting stripes and either of the concave grooves. Further, the cross sectional shape of each of these convex strips and concave grooves is not limited to that in each of the embodiments. The bosses 14 in the Embodiment 16 are not necessarily formed in the columnar shape, but can be formed in a square pillar shape, a wall shape or the like. Further, the bosses may be also arranged on a side of the cover body 20.

Embodiment 20

Fig. 27 shows an enlarged perspective view of a forward passenger seat side part of an instrument panel as an example of the panel 1 for an airbag. The instrument panel is constructed by polypropylene (PP) as a thermoplastic hard synthetic resin material mixed with rubber and a filler. An opening portion 12 is formed in a substantially rectangular shape on an upper face of a main body 10 of this instrument

panel in its central position in a back and forth direction (a slanting vertical direction in Fig. 27). This opening portion 12 is closed by a cover body 20 constructed by olefin thermoplastic elastomer (TPO) integrally molded by two-color molding described later. A cross section of this opening portion 12 is shown in Fig. 28.

In Fig. 28, a peripheral edge 113 of the opening portion of the main body 10 is bent along a lower face of an outer peripheral edge of the cover body 20, and this outer peripheral edge and the peripheral edge 113 are melt-bonded to each other. A surface of the peripheral edge 113 of the opening portion of the main body 10 is stepwise lowered in its entire periphery so that a groove portion 22 having a concave shape is formed between this surface and an outer peripheral face of the cover body 20. A rib 25 is formed on a rear face of the cover body 20 on its inner side near a front side (a left-hand side in Fig. 28) of the cover body 20. The rib 25 extends in a straight line shape along the front side of the cover body 20 and is projected slantingly forward (leftward in Fig. 28). This rib 25 is covered with a metallic retainer 251 and is connected to a bracket 811 of an airbag case 82 located behind the cover body 20 by a bolt 252 and a nut 253. The airbag case 82 which stores the airbag 81 is connected to an insert material 13 of the main body 10 by the bolt 252 and the nut 253 with the bracket 812.

A concave groove 222 is formed on the rear face of the

cover body 20 along its three sides and is deeply recessed in an angular cross section towards the surface. A thin wall portion 23 which ruptures at an inflating time of the airbag is formed between the concave groove 222 and a cover surface. A convex strip 225 having an angular cross section and continuously connected to the concave groove 222 is formed along the remaining one side (the front side) of the cover body 20 from both end portions of the rib 25. This convex strip 225 constitutes a deformation restricting portion in two-color molding described later. When the airbag inflates, the thin wall portion 23 (Fig. 27) is ruptured along three sides of the cover body 20, and the cover body 20 is opened into a cabin (upward in Fig. 28) with a portion near a root of the rib 25 as a hinge center so that the airbag is swollen out of the opening portion 12.

Such a panel 1 for the airbag is produced by two-color molding explained below. Namely, in Fig. 29, a convex strip 52 having the same shape as the concave groove portion 22 is formed in a slide type opposite mold 51 within an upper mold 5 in its molding face outer periphery. An end face of a slide core 61 within a lower mold 6 comes in press contact with an end face of this convex strip 52, and a cover body molding cavity C1 and a main body molding cavity C2 outside this cover body molding cavity C1 are separated from each other. A convex strip 62 having an angular cross section and a concave groove 63 having an angular cross section and continuously connected to this

convex strip 62 are formed on a molding face of the lower mold 6 along an inner side of the slide core 61. A TPO material is injected into this cover body molding cavity C1 so that the cover body 20 is molded. The concave groove 222 (Fig. 28) is molded by the convex strip 62 on the rear face of the cover body 20. Further, a convex strip 225 (Fig. 28) is molded by the concave groove 63.

While the TPO material within the cover body molding cavity C1 is yet in a semisolid state, the slide core 61 is subsequently retreated by a constant amount as shown in Fig. 30, and the cover body molding cavity C1 and the main body molding cavity C2 are communicated with each other. In this state, a PP material compatible with the TPO material is injected into the main body molding cavity C2. The main body molding cavity C2 is filled with the PP material and this PP material also enters a clearance cavity C3 formed by retreating the slide core 61 and becomes a peripheral edge 113 of an airbag swelling-out port of the main body 10. The PP material is then melt-bonded to an outer peripheral lower face of the cover body 20 in the semisolid state.

As shown in Figs. 31 and 32, a large injecting pressure is applied to the cover body 20 in the semisolid state as the PP material flows into the clearance cavity C3 (an arrow in each of these figures). When soft TPO is particularly used as a material of the cover body 20 as in this embodiment, each portion of the outer peripheral edge of the cover body 20 is

retreated and deformed according to the applied pressure as shown by a chain line in each of Figs. 31 and 32 so that the outer peripheral edge of the cover body 20 is shifted from its predetermined shape, resulting in disadvantages of wavy shape. Here, in this embodiment, as already described, the convex strip 62 and the concave groove 63 are formed on the molding face of the lower mold 6. Therefore, the concave groove 222 and the convex strip 225 as a deformation restricting portion are formed by the convex strip 62 and the concave groove 63 on the rear face (a lower face in Figs. 31 and 32) of the cover body 20 in the semisolid state. The concave groove 222 and the convex strip 225 are respectively engaged with the convex strip 62 and the concave groove 63 and prevent the retreating deformation of the outer peripheral edge of the cover body 20 against the injecting pressure. Thus, a wavy deforming phenomenon of the outer peripheral edge of the cover body 20 is effectively dissolved. The concave groove 222 is the deformation restricting portion for restricting the deformation of the outer peripheral edge of the cover body 20, and also has a function for forming the thin wall portion 23 which ruptures at the inflating time of the airbag at the outer peripheral edge of the cover body 20.

Embodiment 21

When a hard material such as a PPE (polyphenylene ether)/PA(polyamide) alloy and PS (polystyrene) elastomer is

used instead of a soft material such as the TPO as a material of the cover body 20, it is not necessary to form the convex strip 225 as the deformation restricting portion and the concave groove 63 of the lower mold 6 for forming this convex strip 225.

For example, a denatured PPE can be used in addition to the PP as a material of the main body 10 in combination with the PPE/PA alloy of the cover body 20. Further, for example, a PC(polycarbonate)/ABS (acrylonitrile butadiene styrene) alloy and the like can be used as the material of the main body 10 in combination with the PS elastomer.

The cross sectional shapes of the concave groove 222 and the convex strip 225, and the convex strip 62 and the concave groove 63 are not necessarily limited to the angular shape as shown in Embodiment 20, but may be set to a cross sectional shape having a face engaged with a mold face and preventing the retreating deformation of the outer peripheral edge of the airbag cover. However, in this case, the cross sectional shape of the concave groove 222 (i.e., the convex strip 62) is required to be formed into a shape such that the thin wall portion 23 is formed. Further, it is not necessary that the concave groove 222 and the convex strip 225 are continuously formed on the rear face of the cover body 20 at its outer peripheral edge. The concave groove 222 and the convex strip 225 may be separately spaced from each other. For example, effects of the

deformation restriction can be also obtained when a concave groove engaged with the convex strip formed on the mold face and having the same sectional shape as the concave groove 222 is formed instead of the convex strip 225.

Embodiment 22

Fig. 33 shows an enlarged perspective view of a forward passenger seat side part of an instrument panel as an example of the panel 1 for an airbag. The instrument panel is formed by a thermoplastic hard synthetic resin material such as polypropylene (PP) mixed with rubber and a filler. An opening portion 12 having a substantially rectangular shape is formed on an upper face of a main body 10 of the instrument panel in its central position in a back and forth direction (a slanting vertical direction in Fig. 33) of the main body 10. This opening portion 12 is closed by a cover body 20 molded by integrally two-color molding described later and constructed by olefin thermoplastic elastomer (TPO), etc. Fig. 34 shows a cross section of this opening portion 12.

In Fig. 34, an outer peripheral edge 205 of the cover body 20 is bent along the lower face of a peripheral edge of the opening portion 12 of the main body 10, and this peripheral edge and the outer peripheral edge 205 are melt-bonded to each other. An outer peripheral surface of the cover body 20 is stepwise lowered in its entire periphery so that a groove portion 21 is formed in a concave shape between this outer

peripheral surface and an opening peripheral face of the opening portion 12. A rib 25 is formed on a rear face of the cover body 20 on its front side (a left-hand side of the cover body 20 in Fig. 34). This rib 25 extends along this rear face and is projected slantingly forward in the shape of a straight line. This rib 25 is covered with a metallic retainer 251. The rib 25 is connected to a bracket 811 of an airbag case 82 located behind the cover body 20 by a bolt 252 and a nut 253. The airbag case 82 which stores an airbag 81 is fixed by the bolt 252 and the nut 253 to an insert material 13 of the main body 10 with a bracket 812.

The rear face of the cover body 20 along its three sides except for the front side is deeply recessed in a surface direction, and a thin wall portion 23 which ruptures at an inflating time of the airbag is formed between this rear face and the groove portion 21 having the concave shape. Accordingly, when the airbag inflates, the thin wall portion 23 (Fig. 33) on the three sides of the cover body 20 is ruptured so that the cover body 20 is opened into a cabin (upward in Fig. 34) with a portion near a root of the rib 25 as a hinge center and the airbag is swollen out of the opening portion 12. Here, a concave groove 114 having a rectangular section is formed in a loop shape (Fig. 33) on a lower face of the main body 10 in an external position near a melt-bonded portion of the outer peripheral edge 205 of the cover body 20 so as to surround the outer peripheral edge 205. This concave groove

114 constitutes a deformation restricting portion.

Such a panel 1 for the airbag is produced by two-color molding explained below. Namely, in Fig. 35, a convex strip 52 having the same shape as the groove portion 21 having the concave shape is formed in a slide type opposite mold 51 within an upper mold 5 in an outer periphery of its molding face. An end face of a slide core 61 within a lower mold 6 comes in press contact with an end face of this convex strip 52, and a cover body molding cavity C1 and a main body molding cavity C2 outside this cavity C1 are separated from each other. A convex strip 62 having a rectangular cross section and a predetermined height is formed on a molding face of the lower mold 6 so as to surround the exterior of the slide core 61. This convex strip 62 is projected into the main body molding cavity C2. A hard synthetic resin material is injected into such a main body molding cavity C2 so that the main body 10 is molded.

While the hard synthetic resin material within the main body molding cavity C2 is yet in a semisolid state, the slide core 61 is subsequently retreated by a constant amount as shown in Fig. 36, and the main body molding cavity C2 and the cover body molding cavity C1 are communicated with each other. In this state, a thermoplastic elastomer material compatible with the hard synthetic resin material is injected into the cover body molding cavity C1. The cover body molding cavity C1 is filled with the elastomer material. This elastomer material also enters a clearance cavity C3 caused by retreating the slide

core 61 and becomes an outer peripheral edge 205 of the cover body 20 and is melt-boded to a lower face of the main body 10 in the semisolid state.

As shown in Fig. 37, as the elastomer material flows into the clearance cavity C3 (an arrow in Fig. 37), a large injecting pressure is applied to the main body 10 in the semisolid state and each portion of the peripheral edge of the opening portion 12 of the main body 10 is retreated and deformed according to the applied pressure as shown by a chain line in Fig. 37. Thus, as described in the conventional problems, the peripheral edge of the opening portion 12 is shifted from its predetermined shape, resulting in a wavy shape. Here, in this embodiment, as already described, the convex strip 62 having a predetermined height is formed on a molding face of the lower mold 6. Therefore, the above-mentioned concave groove 114 as a deformation restricting portion is formed by this convex strip 62 on the rear face (a lower face in Fig. 37) of the main body 10 in the semisolid state. A side face 114a of the concave groove 114 is engaged with a side face 62a of the convex strip 62 and prevents the retreating deformation of the main body 10 at the peripheral edge of the opening portion 12 against the injecting pressure. As a result, a wavy deforming phenomenon of the opening portion 12 at its peripheral edge is effectively dissolved.

Effects similar to those in Embodiment 22 are also obtained when a concave groove 63 having a rectangular cross section is formed as a deformation restricting portion on a molding face of a lower mold 6 as shown in Fig. 38 and a convex strip 115 having a rectangular section and a side face 115a engaged with a side face 63a of the concave groove 63 is formed on the rear face of the main body 10. In this case, it is advantageous in strength since no thickness of the main body 10 is reduced.

Embodiment 24

The cross sectional shape of the deformation restricting portion is not necessarily set to the rectangular shape as in each of Embodiments 22 and 23, but may be set to such as a curved surface if the cross sectional shape has a face engaged with the mold face and preventing the retreating deformation of the main body at the peripheral edge of the opening portion. Further, it is not necessary to continuously form this deformation restricting portion so as to surround a main body peripheral edge portion, but may be separately spaced from each other.

Embodiment 25

Fig. 39 shows an enlarged perspective view of a forward passenger seat side part of an instrument panel as an example of the panel 1 for an airbag. The instrument panel is formed

by polypropylene (PP) as a hard synthetic resin material mixed with rubber, a filler and the like. An opening portion 12 having a substantially rectangular shape is formed on an upper face of a main body 10 of the instrument panel in its central position in a back and forth direction (a slanting vertical direction in Fig. 39) of the main body 10. This opening portion 12 is closed by a cover body 20 integrally molded with the main body 10 by one-color molding described later and constructed by a PP material. Fig. 40 shows a cross section of this opening portion 12.

In Fig. 40, an outer peripheral edge 221 of the cover body 20 is partitioned off from the main body 10 by a groove portion 22 having a rectangular section and a concave shape and formed along an entire periphery of the outer peripheral edge 221. The outer peripheral edge 221 is continuously connected to the main body 10. A rib 25 is formed on a rear face of the cover body 20 on its front side (a left-hand side of the cover body 20 in Fig. 40). This rib 25 extends along this rear face and is projected slantingly forward in the shape of a straight line. This rib 25 is covered with a metallic retainer 251. The rib 25 is connected to a bracket 811 of an airbag case 82 located behind the cover body 20 by a bolt 252 and a nut 253. The airbag case 82 which an airbag 81 is fixed by the bolt 252 and the nut 253 to an insert material 13 of the main body 10 with a bracket 812.

The rear face of the cover body 20 along its three sides

except for the front side is deeply recessed towards the surface, and a thin wall portion 23 which ruptures at an expanding time of the airbag is formed between this rear face and the groove portion 22 having the concave shape. Further, a crack preventing layer 7 is formed on the rear face of a general portion of the cover body 20 from the rib 25 to a portion near the thin wall portion 23. In this embodiment, a net having many small holes and made of polyamide (PA) is used as this crack preventing layer 7. This net 7 made of PA has a sufficient flexibility and tensile strength. When the airbag inflates, the thin wall portion 23 (Fig. 39) on the three sides of the cover body 20 is ruptured so that the cover body 20 is opened into a cabin (upward in Fig. 40) with a portion near a root of the rib 25 as a hinge center and the airbag is swollen out of the opening portion 12. When the cover body 20 is rotated and opened with a portion near the root of the rib 25 as a hinge center, the net 7 made of PA as the crack preventing layer is joined on the rear face of the general portion of the cover body 20 so that no cover body 20 is cracked as broken pieces.

Such a panel 1 for the airbag is produced by one-color insert molding explained below. Namely, in Fig. 41, a convex strip 52 for forming the groove portion 22 having the concave shape is formed in a slide type opposite mold 51 within an upper mold 5 in an outer periphery of its molding face. In contrast to this, a convex strip 61 for forming the thin wall portion 23 and a concave portion 62 for forming the rib 25 are formed

on a molding face of a lower mold 6. A continuous molding cavity C1 for integrally molding the main body 10 and the cover body 20 is formed between the upper mold 5 and the lower mold 6.

The net 7 made of PA is arranged on a molding face of the lower mold 6 from one side face of the concave portion 62 to one side face of the convex strip 61. In this net 7 made of PA, an engaging piece 71 formed in a required position of an outer peripheral edge of this net is inserted into concave portions 63, 64 for engagement formed on the molding face of the lower mold 6 and is positioned. A PP material is injected into such a molding cavity C1 so that the main body 10 and the cover body 20 are integrally molded and the net 7 made of PA is joined onto the rear face of the cover body 20. At this time, the PP material also enters each of the small holes of the net 7 made of PA and is strongly joined with the cover body 20. Further, since the engaging piece 71 is inserted into the concave portions 63 and 64 for engagement and is positioned, no shift in position of the net 7 made of PA is caused even when an injecting pressure of the PP material is applied to this net.

The crack preventing layer can be constructed by using a soft resin material, a film of a soft elastomer material such as olefin-including thermoplastic elastomer (TPO) or nonwoven fabric in addition to the net made of PA.

Fig. 42 shows an enlarged perspective view of a forward passenger seat side part of an instrument panel as an example of the panel 1 for an airbag. The instrument panel is formed by a thermoplastic hard synthetic resin material such as polypropylene (PP) mixed with rubber, a filler and the like. An opening portion 12 having a substantially rectangular shape is formed on an upper face of a main body 10 of the instrument panel in its central position in a back and forth direction (a slanting vertical direction in Fig. 42) of the main body 10. This opening portion 12 is closed by a cover body 20 integrally molded by two-color molding and constructed by olefin thermoplastic elastomer (TPO) and the like. Fig. 43 shows a cross section of this opening portion 12.

In Fig. 43, an outer peripheral edge 205 of the cover body 20 is bent along the lower face of a peripheral edge of the opening portion 12 of the main body 10, and this peripheral edge and the outer peripheral edge 205 are melt-bonded to each other. An outer peripheral surface of the cover body 20 is stepwise lowered in its entire periphery so that a groove portion 21 is formed in a concave shape between this outer peripheral surface and an opening peripheral face of the opening portion 12. A rib 25 having a plate shape and a constant thickness is formed on a rear face of the cover body 20 on its front side (a left-hand side of the cover body 20 in Fig. 43). This rib 25 extends along this rear face and is projected slantingly forward in the shape of a straight line. A bracket

85 as a connecting member described later in detail is connected to this rib 25. The bracket 85 reaches an airbag case 82 which stores an airbag 81. This airbag case 82 is fixed by a bolt 252 and a nut 253 to an insert material 13 of the main body 10 with a bracket 812.

The rear face of the cover body 20 along its three sides except for the front side is deeply recessed towards the surface, and a thin wall portion 23 which ruptures at an inflating time of the airbag is formed between this rear face and the groove portion 21 having the concave shape. Accordingly, when the airbag inflates, the thin wall portion 23 (Fig. 42) on the three sides of the cover body 20 ruptures so that the cover body 20 is opened into a cabin (upward in Fig. 43) with a portion near a root of the rib 25 as a hinge center and the airbag is swollen out of the opening portion 12.

As already mentioned above, the bracket 85 is connected to the rib 25 and its detailed construction will next be explained. As shown in Fig. 44, each of notches 831 is formed in a U-shape in an end tip portion of the rib 25 on its plate face. The notches 831 are spaced from each other in a width direction of the rib 25 and extend from an end tip of the rib 25 to the plate interior in plural positions (four positions in this embodiment). The bracket 85 is formed by curving a metallic plate body having a constant width in a substantially U-shape. A base end 853 of the bracket 85 is joined with a side face of the airbag case 82 (Fig. 43) and a plate face of an

end tip 854 of the bracket 85 is located along a lower face of the rib 25.

Fixing holes 851 are spaced from each other in the width direction on the plate face of the end tip 854 of the bracket 85 and are located in the same positions as the notches 831. As shown in Fig. 45, plural (three on each of left-hand and right-hand sides in this embodiment) projections 852 are formed in left-hand and right-hand positions of the respective fixing holes 851 such that these projections 852 form an inverse V-shape. As shown in Fig. 46, these projections 852 are formed into a trapezoidal shape by punching the plate face of the end tip 854 of the bracket 85 and cut-rising this plate face (Figs. 47 and 48). As shown in Fig. 43, a retainer plate 86 made of a metal is located on an upper face of the rib 25 and is constructed by an elongated plate (Fig. 44) having a length approximately equal to the width of the rib 25. Fixing holes 861 are formed on a face of the retainer plate 86 in the same positions as the notches 831 of the rib 25.

The rib 25 and the bracket 85 are connected to each other by locating the respective fixing holes 861 and 851 of the retainer plate 86 and the bracket 85 in conformity with positions of the notches 831 of the rib 25, and inserting a bolt 252 (Fig. 43) into each of these fixing holes 861 and 851 and fastening this bolt 252 by a nut 253. In this fastening, the projections 852 formed on the plate face of the end tip 854 of the bracket 85 is bitten into the plate face of the rib

25 formed by a synthetic resin material. When the airbag is operated, the thin wall portion 23 (Fig. 42) is ruptured as the airbag inflates as already mentioned above. The cover body 20 is rotated and opened into a cabin with a portion near a root of the rib 25 as a hinge center. At this time, the heat of an inflater within the airbag case 82 is transmitted to the cover body 20 so that the synthetic resin material of the cover body 20 is softened and pulling-up force is upward applied to the cover body 20. Here, since the projections 852 of the bracket 85 are bitten into the rib 25 of the cover body 20 so that the rib 25 and the bracket 85 are connected to each other, no rib 25 is separated from the bracket 85 even when the synthetic resin material is softened in this biting portion. Thus, scattering of the cover body 20 can be reliably prevented.

Embodiment 27

The arrangement of the projections 852 is not limited to that in Embodiment 26. For example, as shown in Fig. 49, the projections 852 may be arranged in a straight line in left-hand and right-hand positions of the fixing holes 851, or may be arranged in a horseshoe shape surrounding each of the fixing holes 851 as shown in Fig. 50. Further, the shape of the projections 852 is not limited to that in Embodiment 26 if the projections 852 are easily bitten into the synthetic resin material of the rib 25. For example, the projections 852 can be formed in such as a wedge shape. Further, since the

number of this arrangement of the projections 852 is determined in design according to a using situation, the number of this arrangement is not limited to that in Embodiment 26. In Embodiment 26, the instrument panel as an example is explained as an inner mounting material made of synthetic resin. However, a door trim and the like may be arranged as this inner mounting material. Further, a base end of the bracket 85 may be also fixed to a structural member on an instrument panel side or a door trim side instead of a structure in which this base end is fixed to the airbag case.

CLAIMS

1. A panel for an airbag of an automobile formed by integrally molding a cover body made of a synthetic resin with a main body made of another synthetic resin, the panel comprising:

a joint portion joined with the cover body provided around an opening portion formed in the main body,

wherein the joint portion constitutes an overlapping portion in which an outer peripheral edge of the cover body is overlapped as being arranged on the inner side of an opening edge of the main body.

2. The panel for an airbag according to claim 1, wherein the synthetic resin of the main body is a hard synthetic resin and the synthetic resin of the cover body is a soft synthetic resin.

3. The panel for an airbag according to claim 1, wherein a concavo-convex portion having a serrate shape or a downward convex shape is formed on a lower face of the main body in the overlapping portion.

4. The panel for an airbag according to claim 1, wherein the main body and the cover body are joined in the overlapping portion by high frequency induction heating and vibration melt-bonding.

5. The panel for an airbag according to claim 1, wherein a groove portion having a closed curve shape is formed in a boundary portion of an end portion of the opening portion of

the main body in the cover body, and a thin wall portion which ruptures and a non-thin wall portion which does not rupture at operating time of the airbag are formed along the groove portion in the cover body in a single line shape or a shape of plural continuous lines.

6. The panel for an airbag according to claim 5, wherein the non-thin wall portion is formed into a shape of one transversal line on an upper or lower side of the cover body, and the thin wall portion is formed in a quadrilateral shape with one side opened along a groove portion in three directions except for the line forming the non-thin wall portion.

7. The panel for an airbag according to claim 5, wherein the non-thin wall portion is formed into a shape of one transversal line on an upper or lower side of the cover body and the thin wall portion is formed along an entire periphery of the groove portion such that a line forming the non-thin wall portion is included in an inner side.

8. The panel for an airbag according to claim 5, wherein the non-thin wall portion can be formed into a shape of one transversal line on each of upper and lower sides of the cover body, and the thin wall portion is formed into a shape of one longitudinal line on each of left-hand and right-hand sides of the cover body;

wherein a second thin wall portion which is not formed along a groove portion is formed into a shape of one transversal line in a central portion of the cover body; and

wherein the entire of the first and second thin wall portions can be formed in an H-shape.

9. The panel according for an airbag to claim 5, wherein the non-thin wall portion is formed into a shape of one transversal line on each of upper and lower sides of the cover body, and the thin wall portion is formed along an entire periphery of a groove portion such that a line forming the non-thin wall portion is included in an inner side;

wherein a second thin wall portion which is not formed along the groove portion is formed into a shape of one transversal line in a central portion of the cover body; and

wherein the entire of the first and second thin wall portions is formed in a shape in which two quadrilaterals are lined up.

10. The panel for an airbag according to claim 5, wherein the non-thin wall portion can be formed into a shape of one longitudinal line on each of left-hand and right-hand sides of the cover body, and the thin wall portion is formed into a shape of one transversal line on each of upper and lower sides of the cover body;

wherein a second thin wall portion which is not formed along a groove portion is formed into a shape of one longitudinal line in a central portion of the cover; and

wherein the entire of the first and second thin wall portions is formed in an H-shape.

11. The panel for an airbag according to claim 5,

wherein the non-thin wall portion can be formed into a shape of one longitudinal line on each of left-hand and right-hand sides of the cover body, and the thin wall portion is formed along an entire periphery of a groove portion such that a line forming the non-thin portion is included with an inner side;

wherein a second thin wall portion is not formed along the groove portion but is formed into a shape of one longitudinal line in a central portion of the cover body; and

wherein the entire of the first and second thin wall portions is formed in a shape in which two quadrilaterals are lined up.

12. The panel for an airbag according to claim 5, wherein a rib is projected in the non-thin wall portion and connected to the airbag case through a connecting member.

13. The panel according to claim 1, wherein an opening edge of the opening portion of the main body is mechanically connected to an outer peripheral edge of the cover body.

14. A panel for an airbag of an automobile including:
a cover body comprising a first synthetic resin material;
a main body comprising a second synthetic resin material compatible with the first synthetic resin material, formed by two-color molding after forming the cover body; and
a deformation restricting portion provided at the outer peripheral edge of the cover body and engaged with a mold face,
wherein the main body comprises an opening portion which

is closed by the cover body; and

wherein the deformation restricting portion restricts deformation of the cover body caused by a molding pressure which acts at a molding time of the main body.

15. The panel for an airbag according to claim 14, wherein the deformation restricting portion is constituted of a convex strip having an angular cross section or a concave groove.

16. A panel for an airbag of an automobile including:

a main body which has an opening portion comprising a first synthetic resin material;

a cover body comprising a second synthetic resin material compatible with the first synthetic resin material, formed by two-color molding after forming the main body; and

a deformation restricting portion provided at the periphery of the opening portion and engaged with a mold face,

wherein the opening portion of the main body comprises is closed by the cover body; and

wherein the deformation restricting portion restricts deformation of the cover body caused by a molding pressure which acts at a molding time of the main body.

17. The panel for an airbag according to claim 16, wherein the deformation restricting portion is a convex strip having an angular cross section or a concave groove.

18. A panel for an airbag of an automobile formed by integrally molding a cover body made of a synthetic resin with a main body made of another synthetic resin and providing a

thin wall portion which ruptures when the airbag is operated;

wherein the main body and the cover body are integrally molded by one-color molding;

wherein a crack preventing layer is provided on a rear surface of a general portion which is a portion except for the thin wall portion of the cover body ; and

wherein the crack preventing layer prevents cracks of the general portion.

19. The panel for an airbag according to claim 5,
wherein a rib is projected in the cover body on the rear face of a portion in which no thin wall portion is formed; and
wherein a connecting member made of a metal and extending from a side of the main body is connected to the rib, and a projection is formed on a surface of this connecting member and is bitten into a surface of the rib when the connecting member is connected to the rib.

20. A method for producing a panel for an airbag of an automobile formed by integrally molding a cover body made of a synthetic resin with a main body made of another synthetic resin, the method comprising:

preparing a thermoplastic material having compatibility as the synthetic resin forming each of the main body and the cover body;

arranging a movable core in a male or female die as a mold;

interrupting a portion between a first cavity portion

for forming a first member and a second cavity portion for forming a second member by allowing the core to project and contact an opposite die;

injecting a material of the first member into the first cavity portion;

forming a communicating portion between the first and second cavity portions by retreating the core; and

injecting a material of the second member into the second cavity portion and the communicating portion so that an overlapping portion of both the first and second members is formed and adhered and both the first and second members are integrally made.

ABSTRACT

A panel for an airbag of an automobile formed by integrally molding a cover body made of a synthetic resin with a main body made of another synthetic resin, the panel comprising:

a joint portion joined with the cover body provided around an opening portion formed in the main body,

wherein the joint portion constitutes an overlapping portion in which an outer peripheral edge of the cover body is overlapped as being arranged on the inner side of an opening edge of the main body.

09/462502

OBLON ET AL (703) 413-3000
DOCKET # 10641-0001-3 PCT SHEET 1 OF 29
1/29

Fig. 1

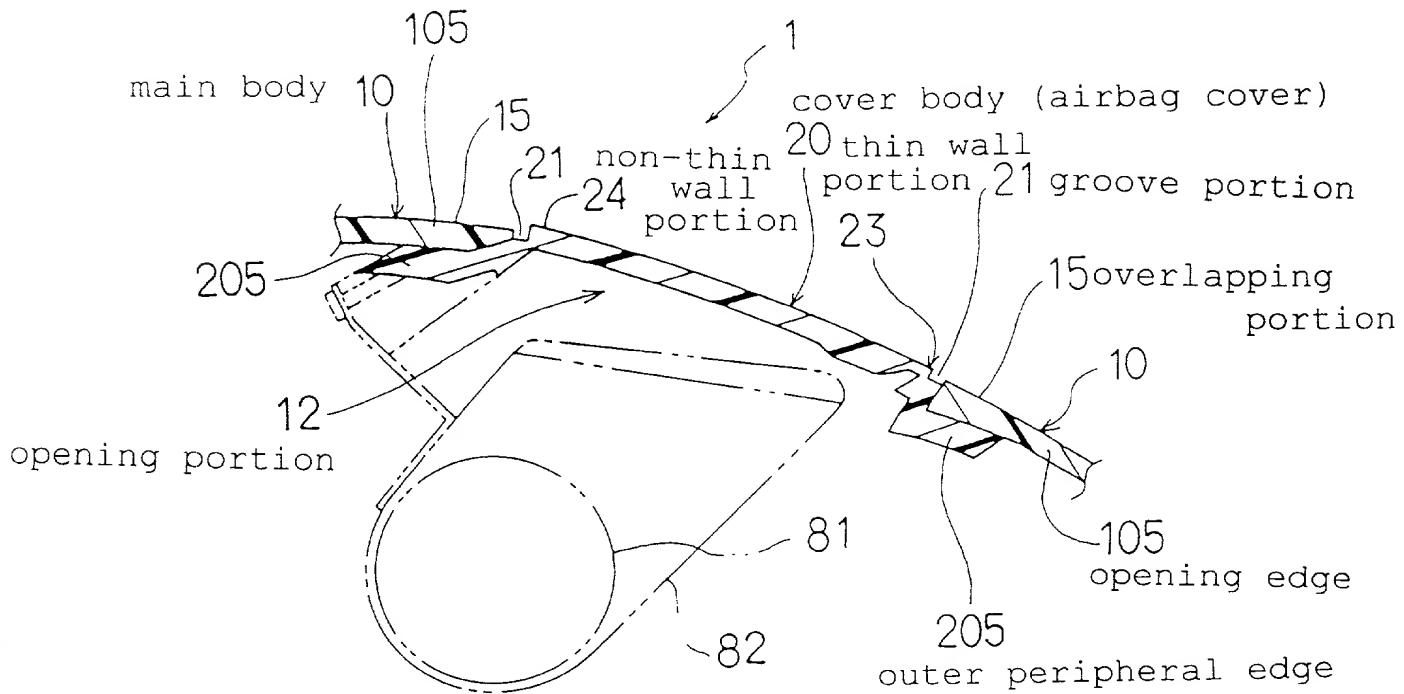
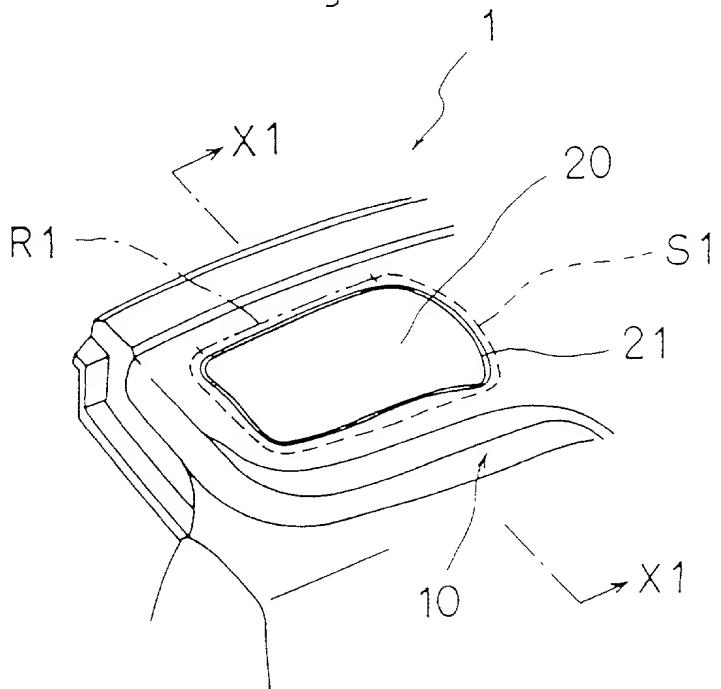


Fig. 2

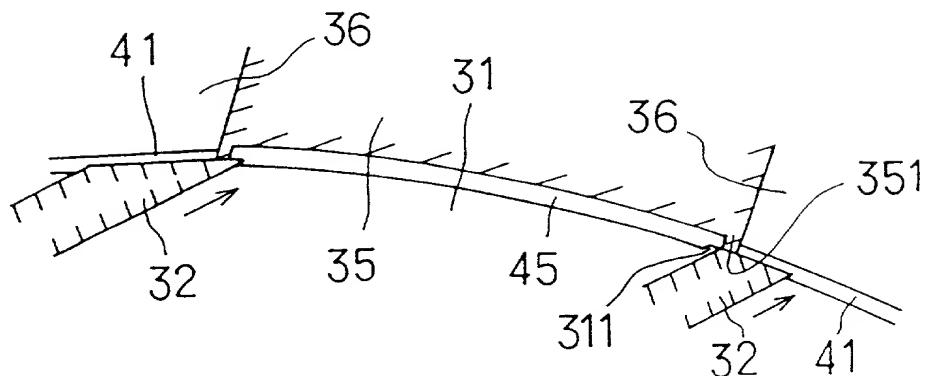


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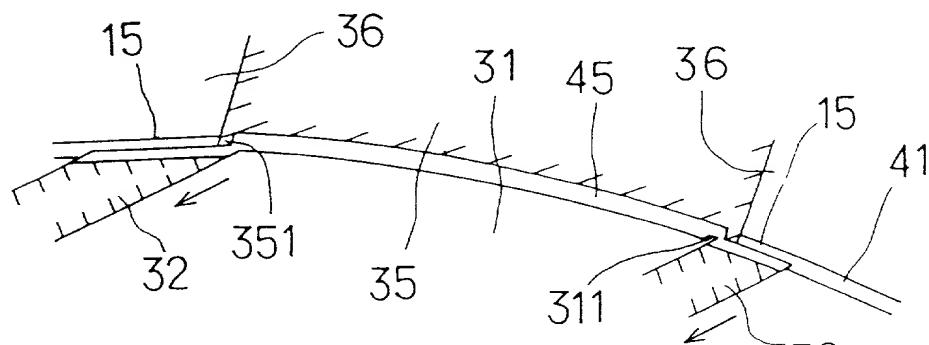
OBLON ET AL (703) 413-3000
DOCKET # 10641-0001-3 PCT SHEET 3 OF 29
21 / 29

Fig. 3

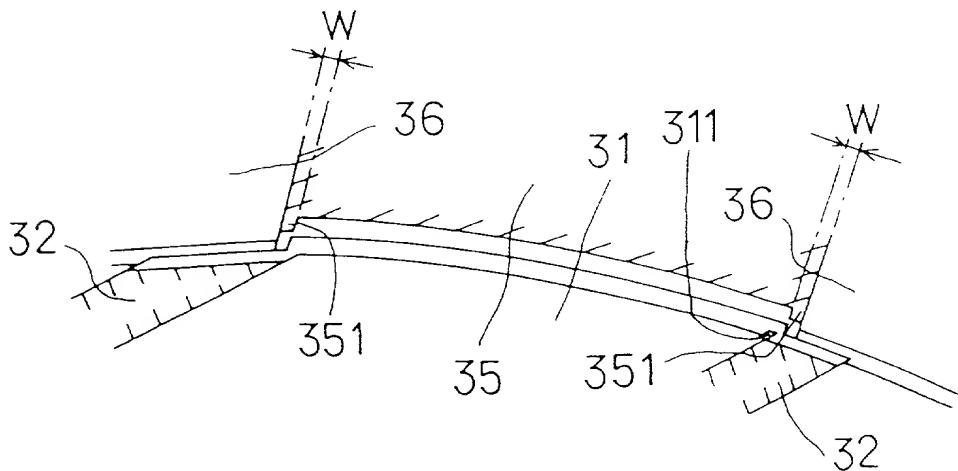
(a)



(b)



(c)



09/462502

OBLON ET AL (703) 413-3000
DOCKET # 10641-0001-3 PCT SHEET 3 / 29

Fig. 4

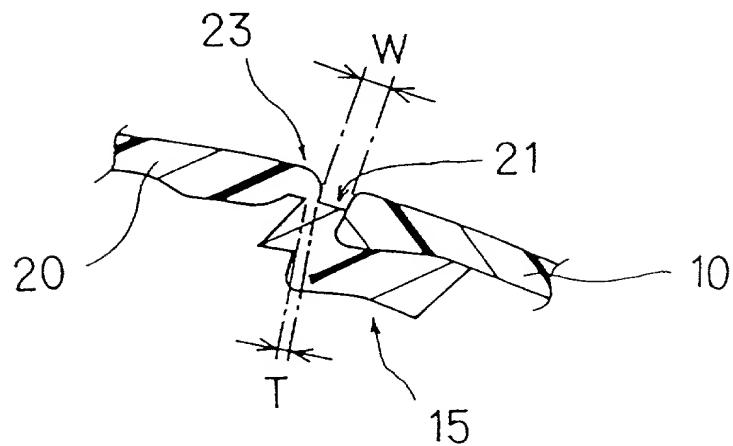
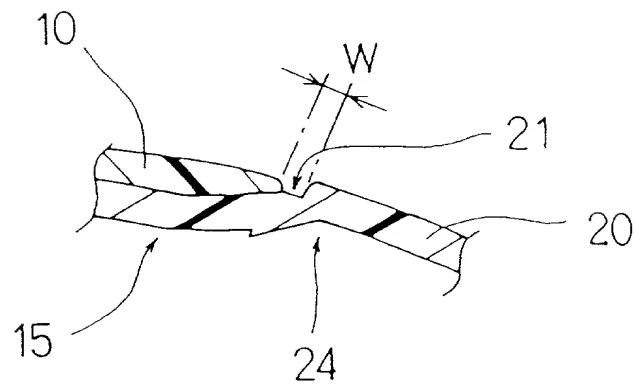


Fig. 5

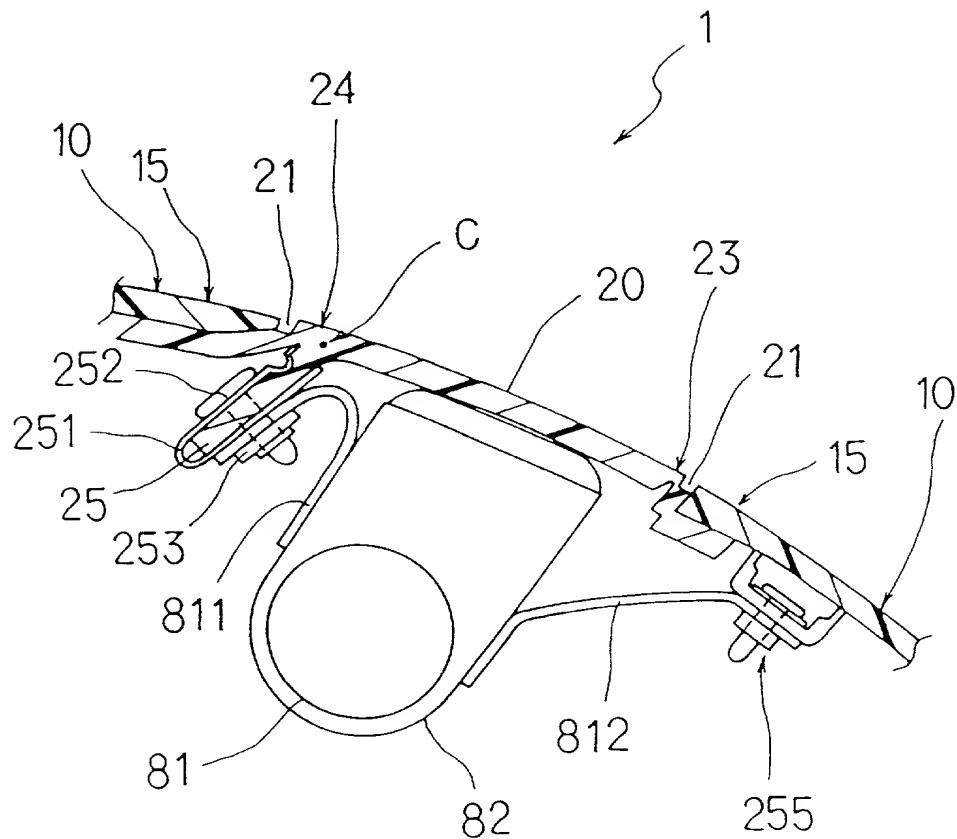


09/462502

OBLON ET AL (703) 413-3000

DOCKET # SHEET 4 OF 29
10641-0001-3 PCT 4 / 29

Fig. 6

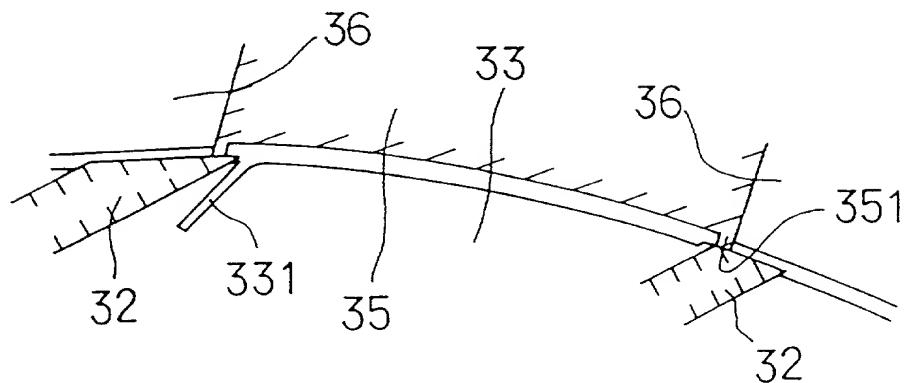


09/462502

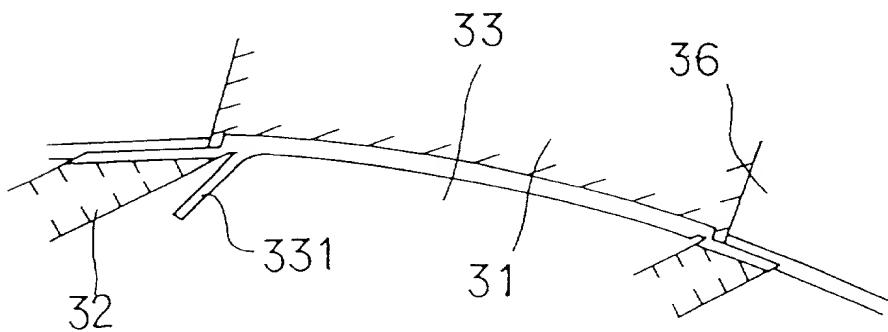
OBLON ET AL (703) 413-3000
OCKET # SHEET 5 OF 29
10641-0001-3 PCT 5 / 29

Fig. 7

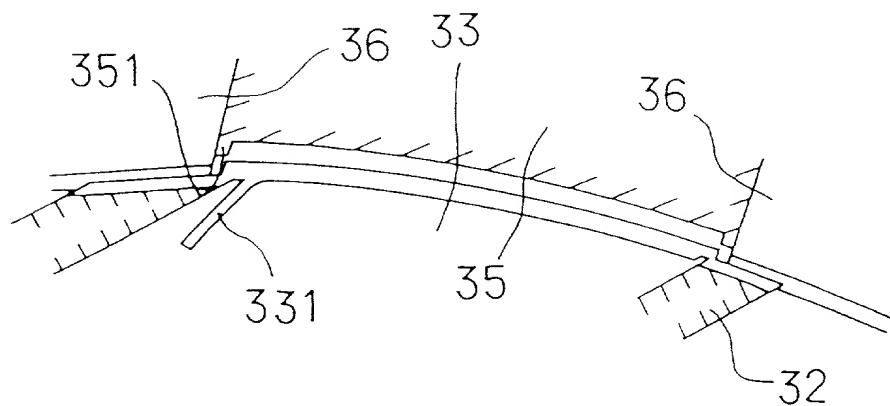
(a)



(b)



(c)



09/462502

OBLON, GATES & STUSSY (703) 413-3000

DOCKET # 10641-0001-3RGT SHEET 6 OF 29
6 / 29

Fig. 8

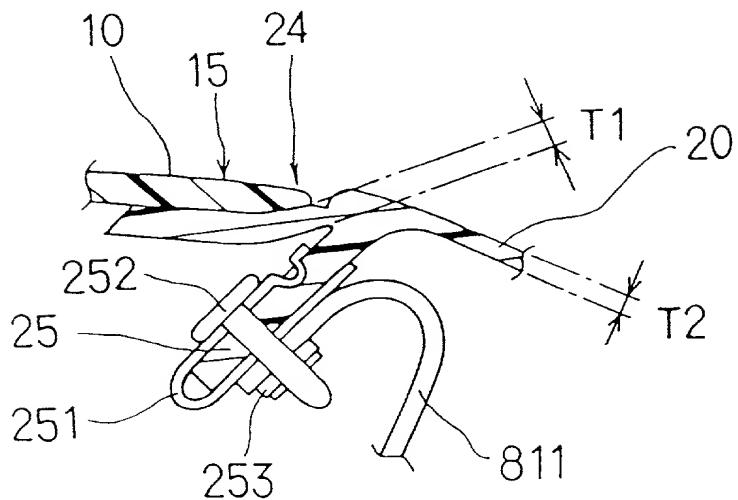
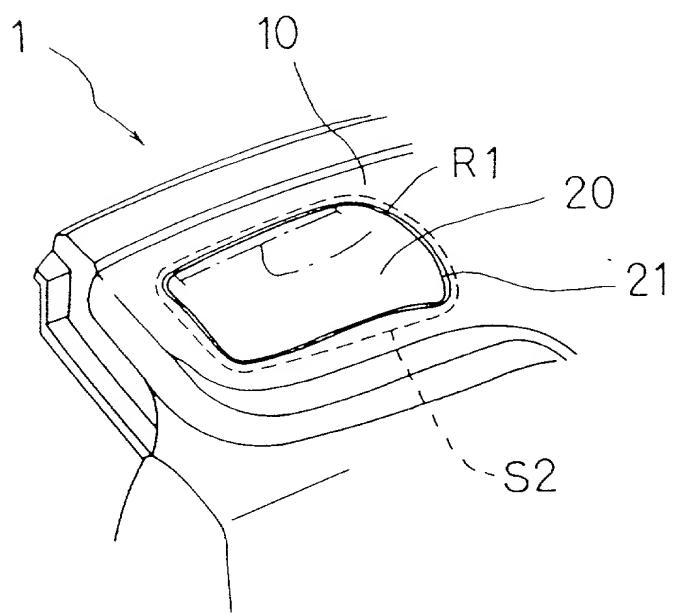


Fig. 9



09/462502

OBLON ENCL (703) 413-3000
OCKET # SHEET 7 OF 29
10641-0001-3PRT 7/29

Fig.10

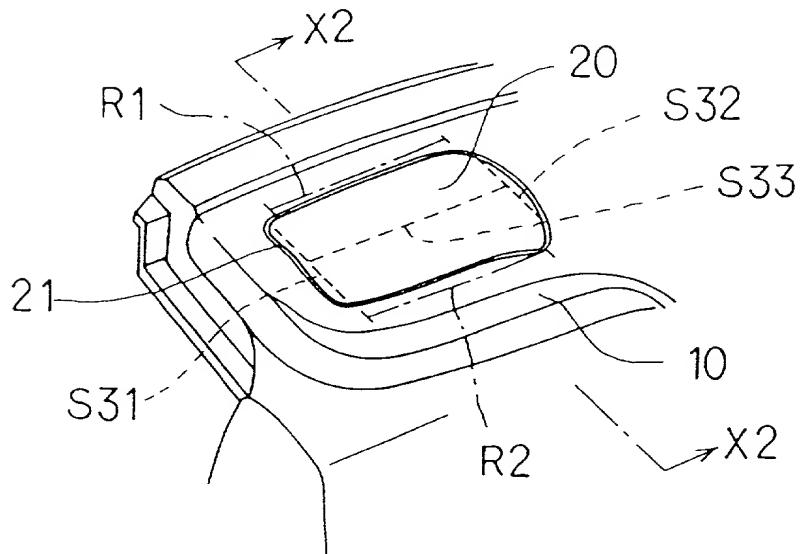
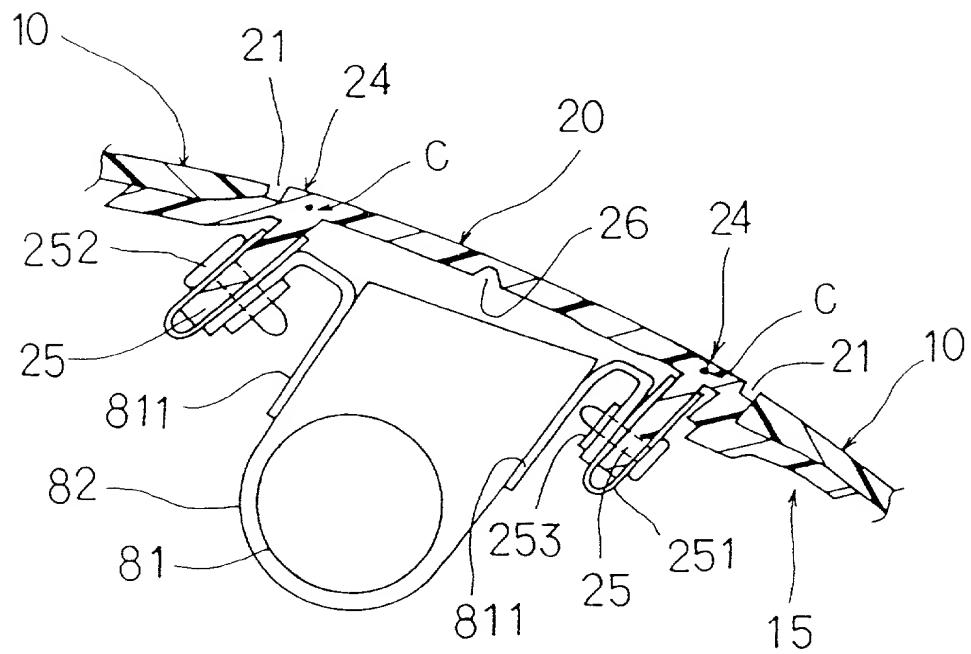


Fig. 11



09/462502

COHEN ET AL (703) 413-3000
DOCKET # 10641-0001-3 PCT
SHEET 8 OF 27
8/29

Fig.12

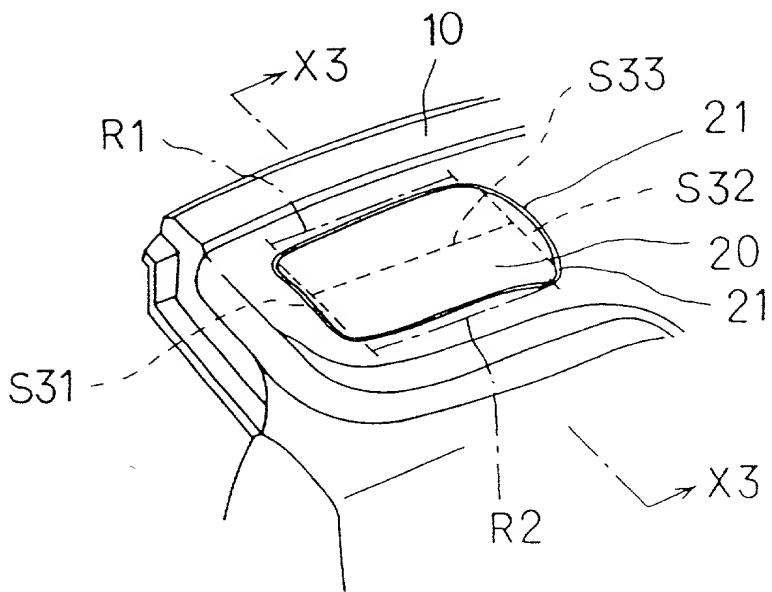
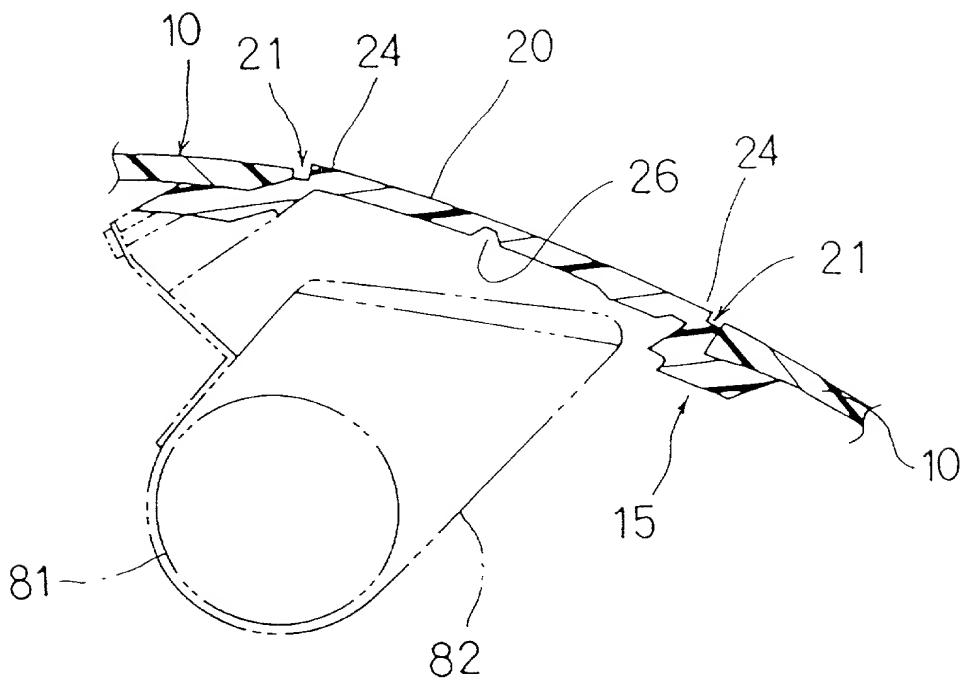


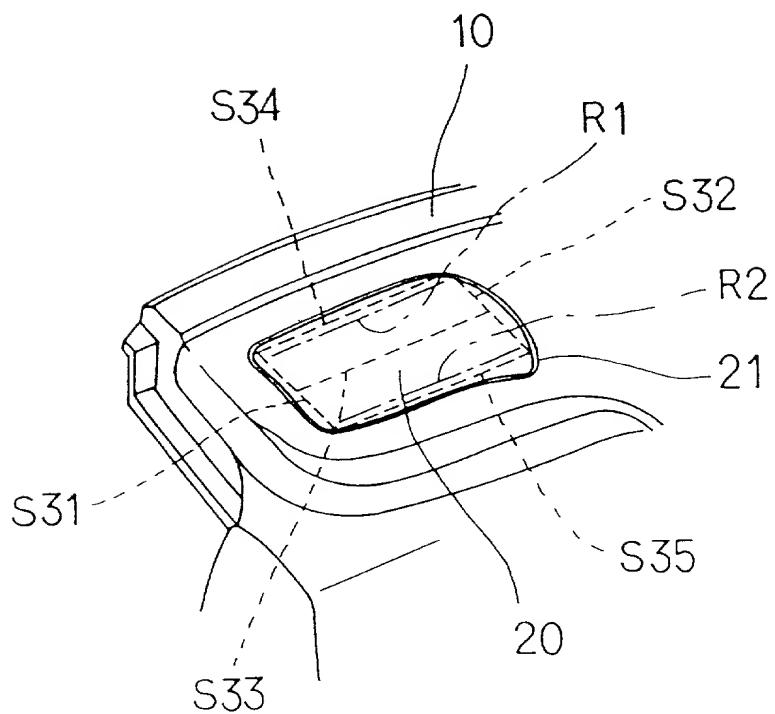
Fig.13



09/462502

OBLON ET AL (703) 413-3000
DOCKET # 10641-0001-3 RET
9 / 29 SHEET 9 OF 22

Fig. 14



10 / 29

Fig. 15

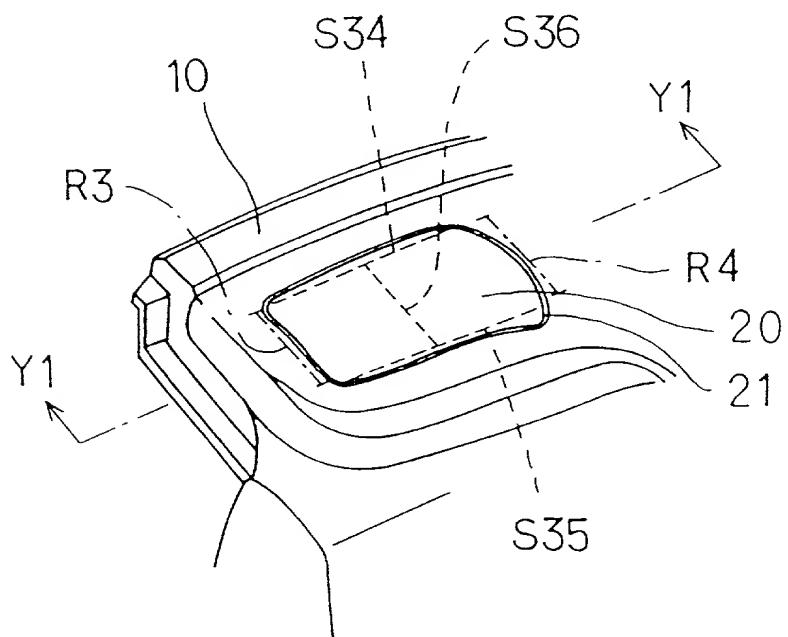
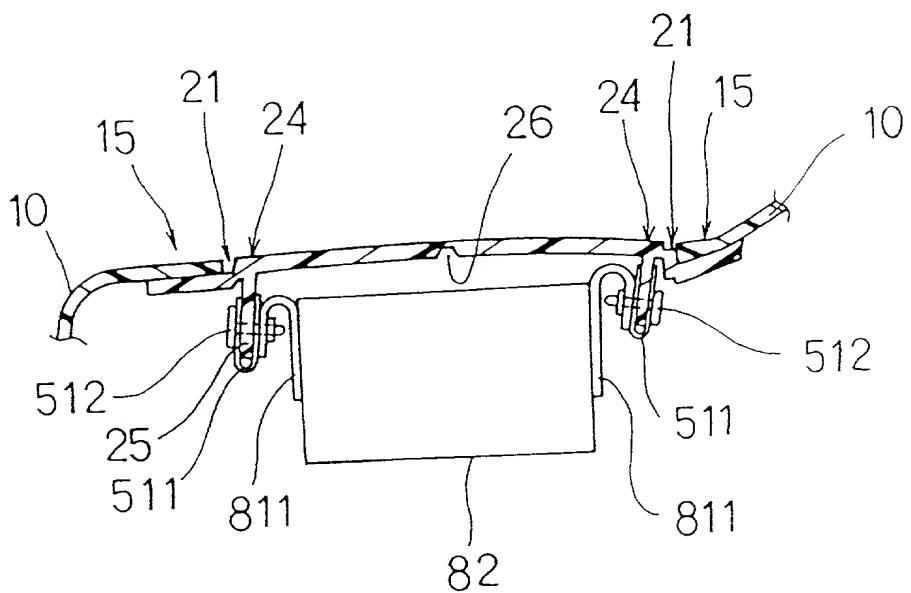


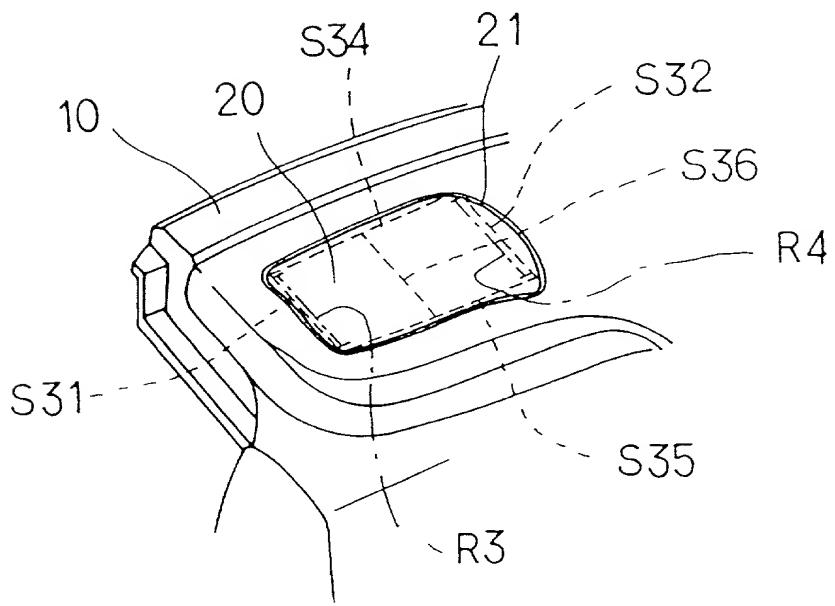
Fig. 16



09/462502

OBLON ET AL (703) 413-3000
OCKET # 11/29 SHEET 11 OF 29
10641-0001-3PCT

Fig.17



09/462502

BLON ET AL (703) 413-3000
10641-0001-3.PCT
SHEET 13 OF 29

12/29

Fig.18

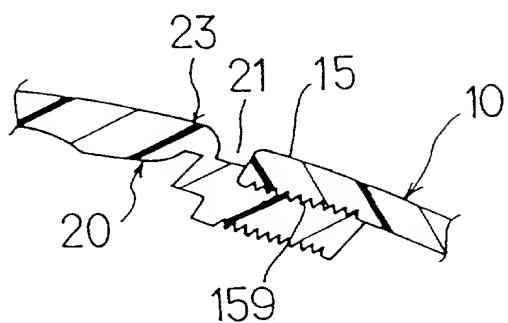


Fig.19

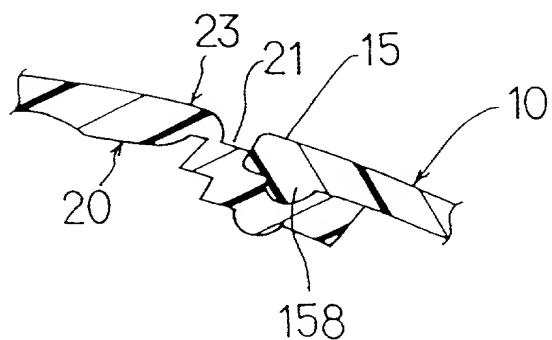
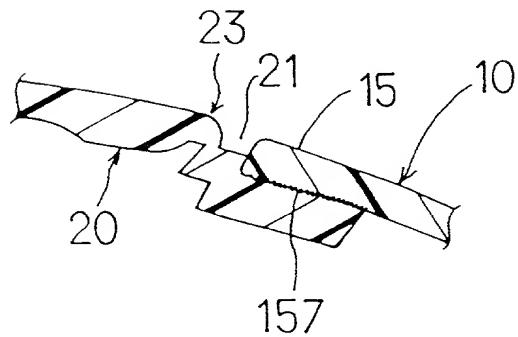


Fig.20



09/462502

JACOB ET AL (703) 413-3000
SHEET 13 OF 29
10641-0001-3 PCT
13 / 29

Fig. 21

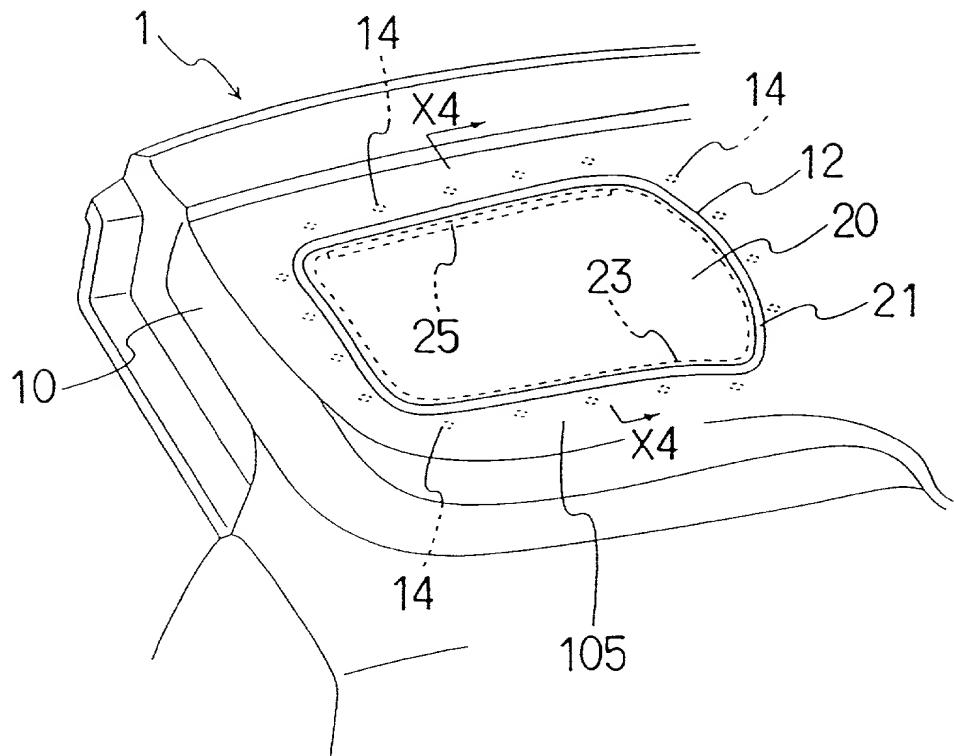
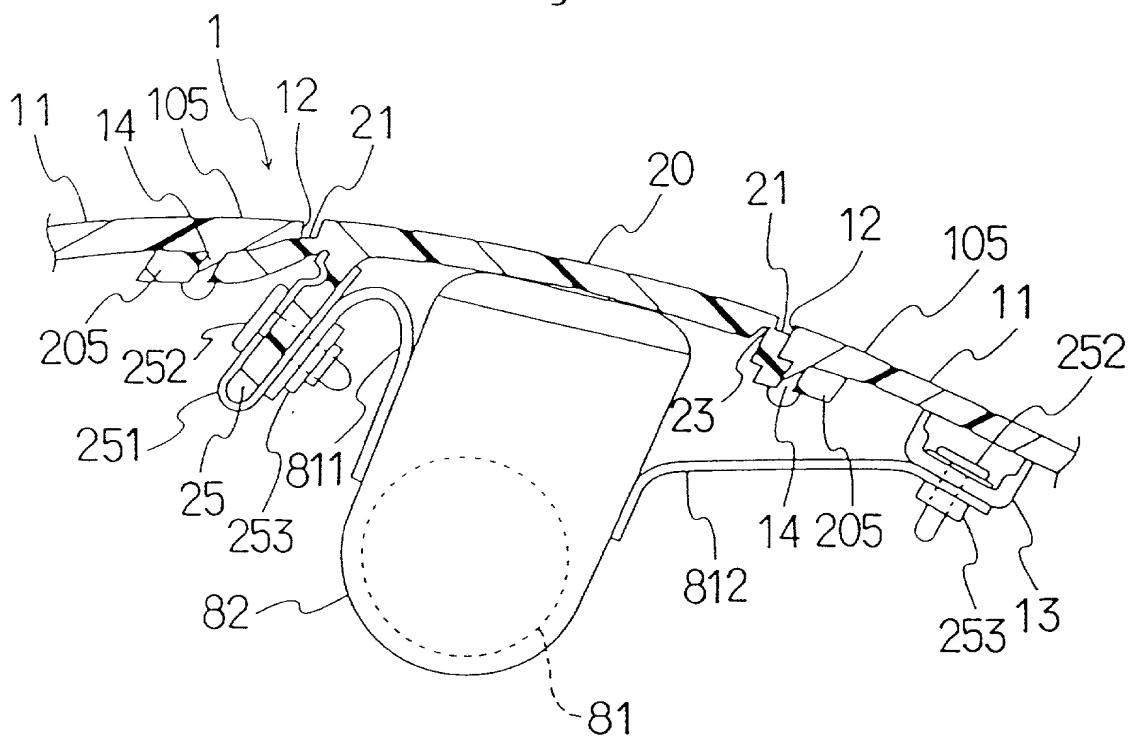


Fig. 22



09/462502

Fig. 23

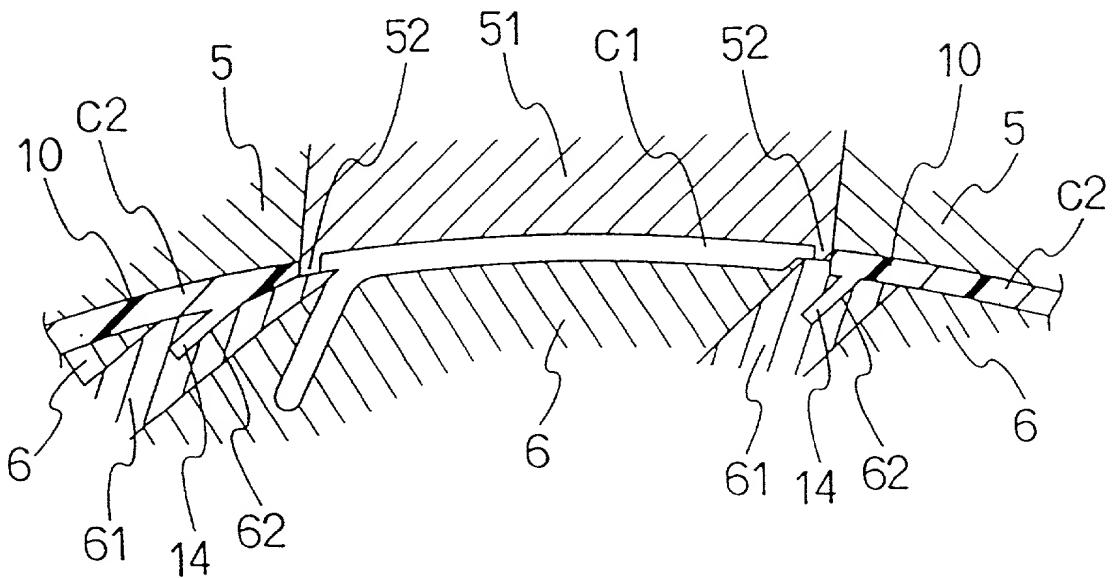
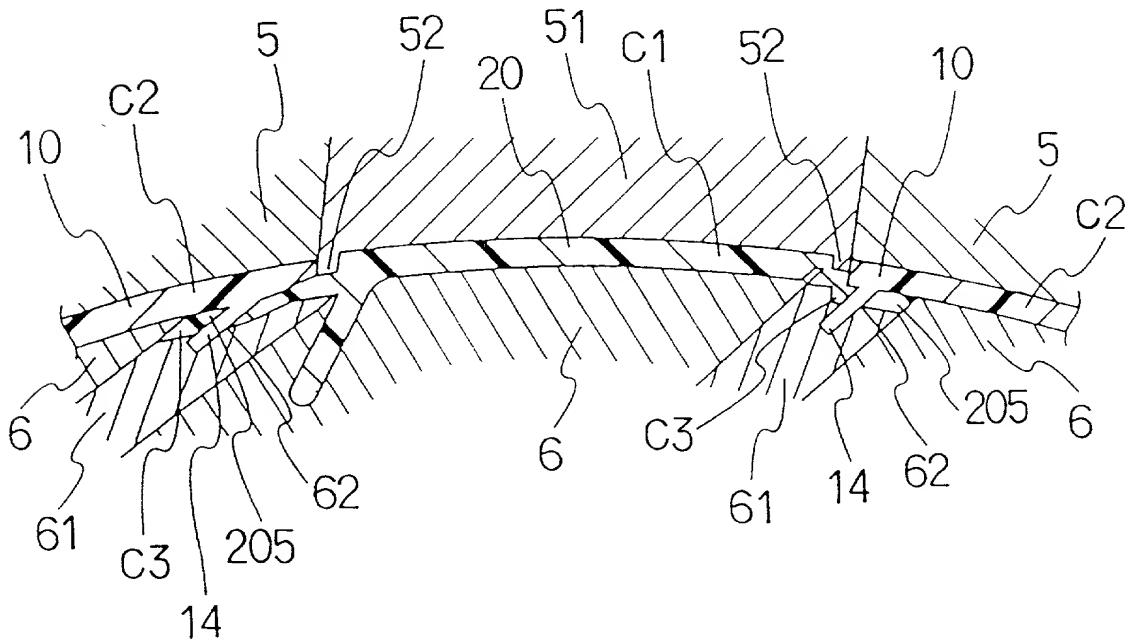


Fig. 24



09/462502

Fig. 25

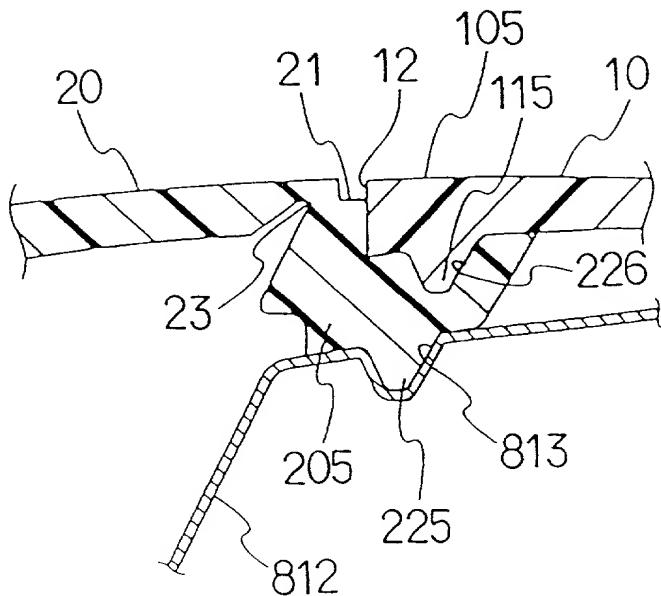
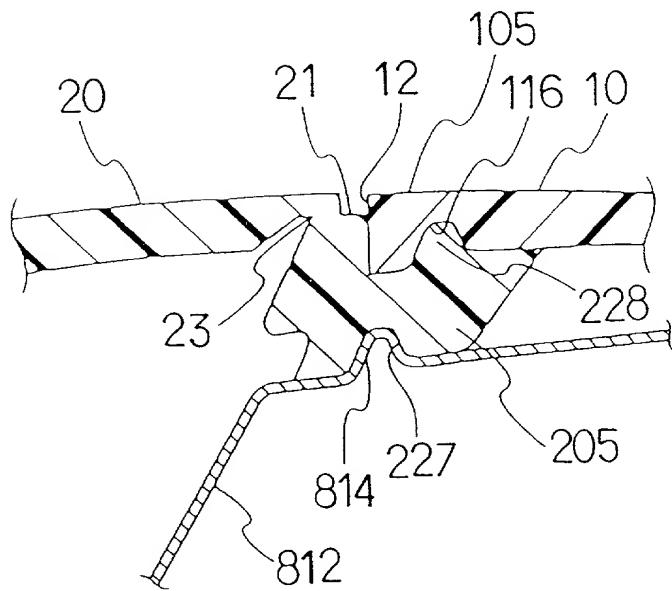


Fig. 26



09/462502

OBLON ET AL (703) 413-3000
OCKET # SHEET OF
10641-0001-3 PCT 6 29

Fig. 27

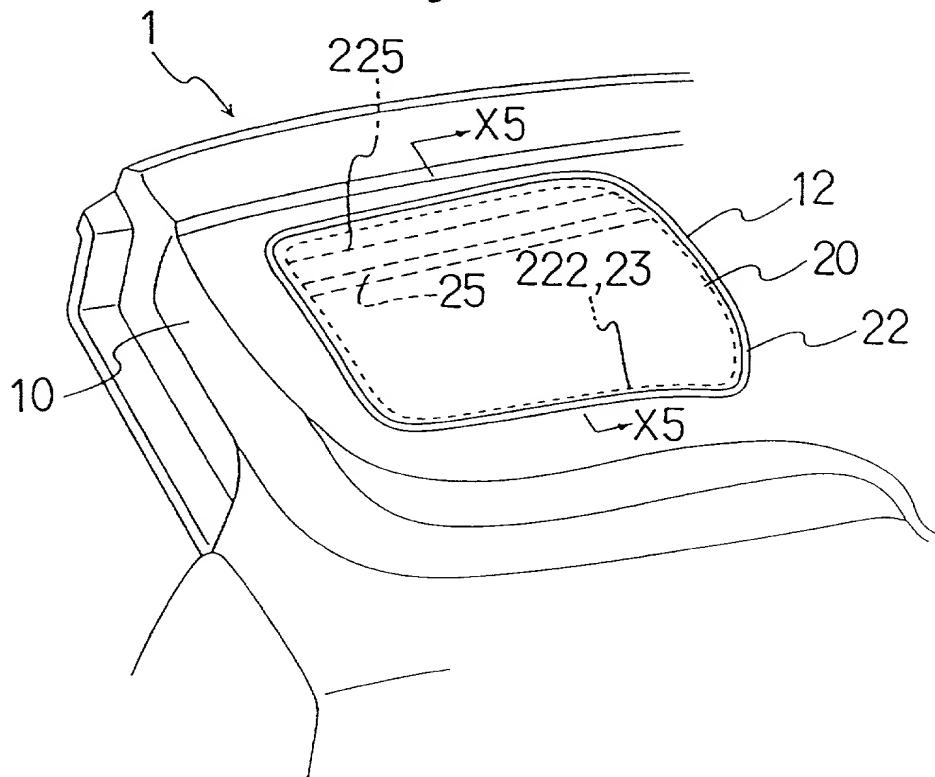
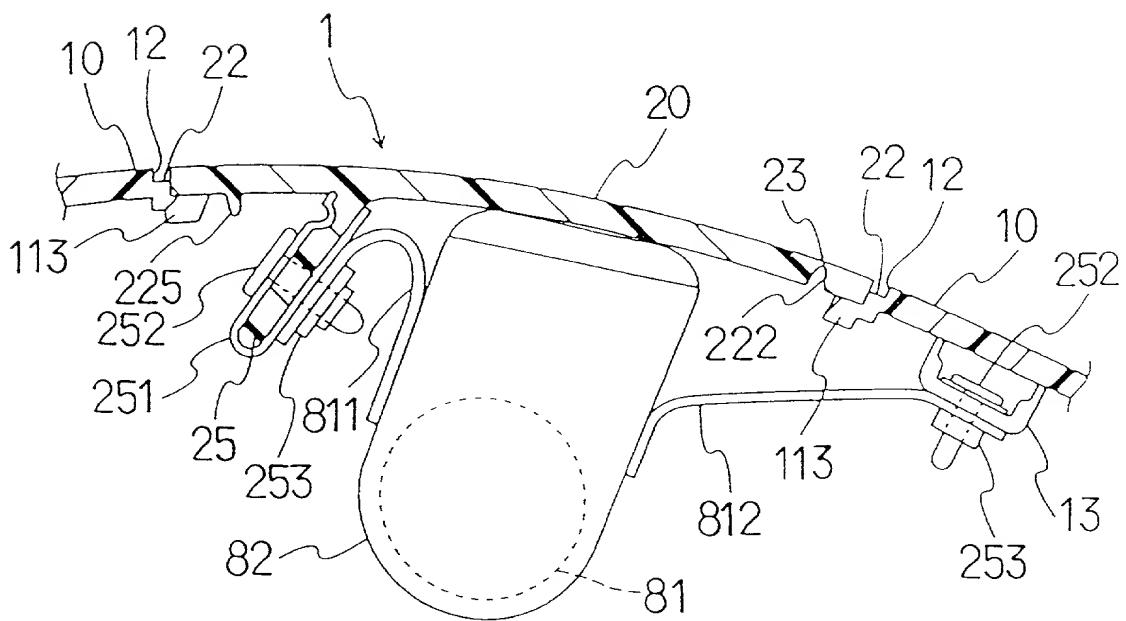


Fig. 28



09/462502

Fig. 29

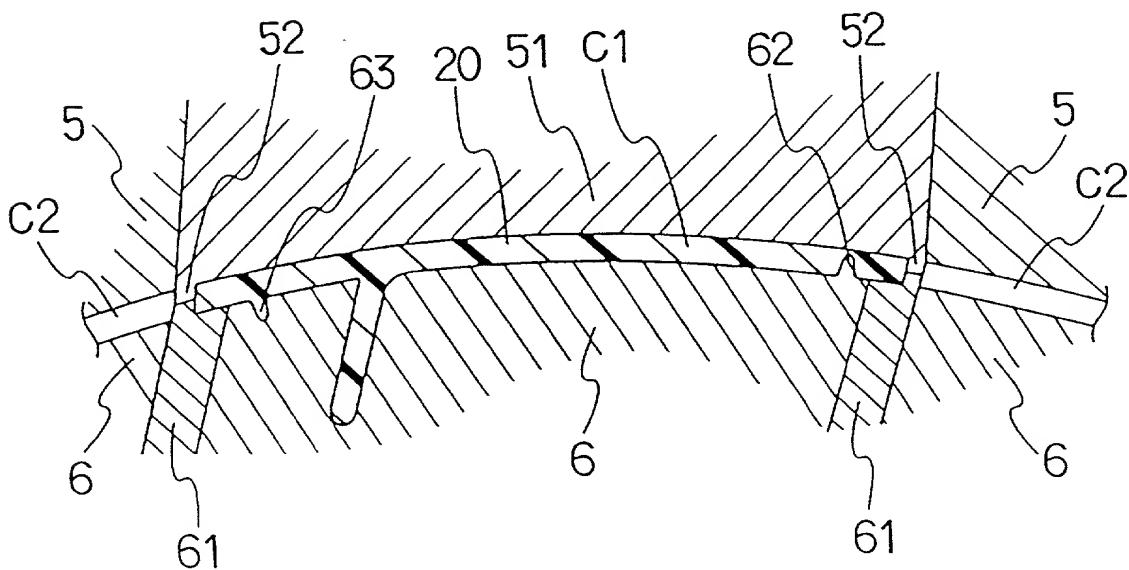
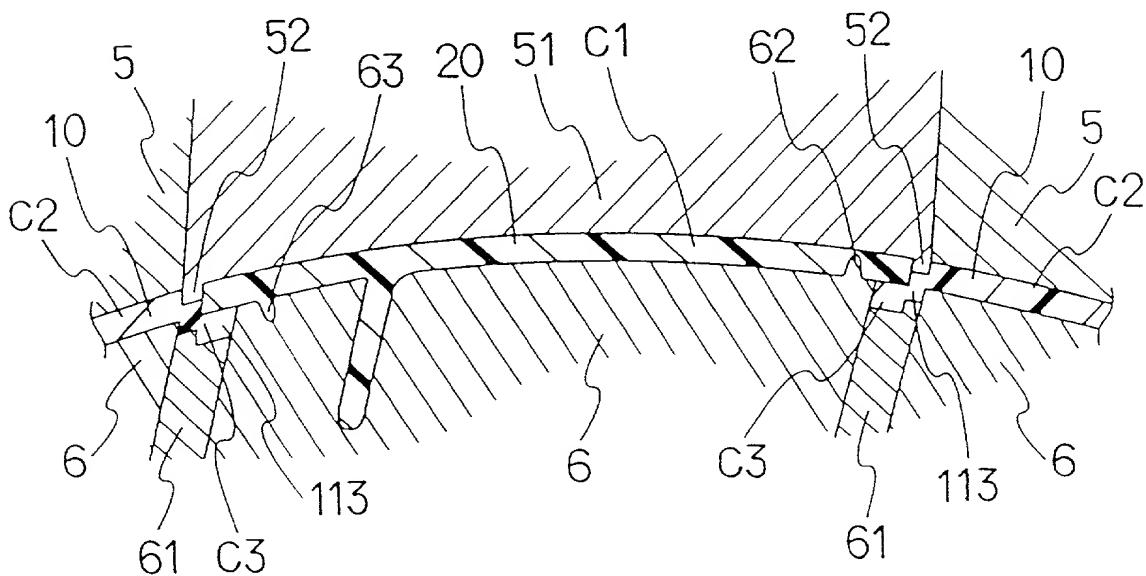


Fig. 30



09/462502

OBLOON ET AL (703) 413-3000
DOCKET # 10641-0001-3PCT SHEET 18 OF 29
18/29

Fig. 31

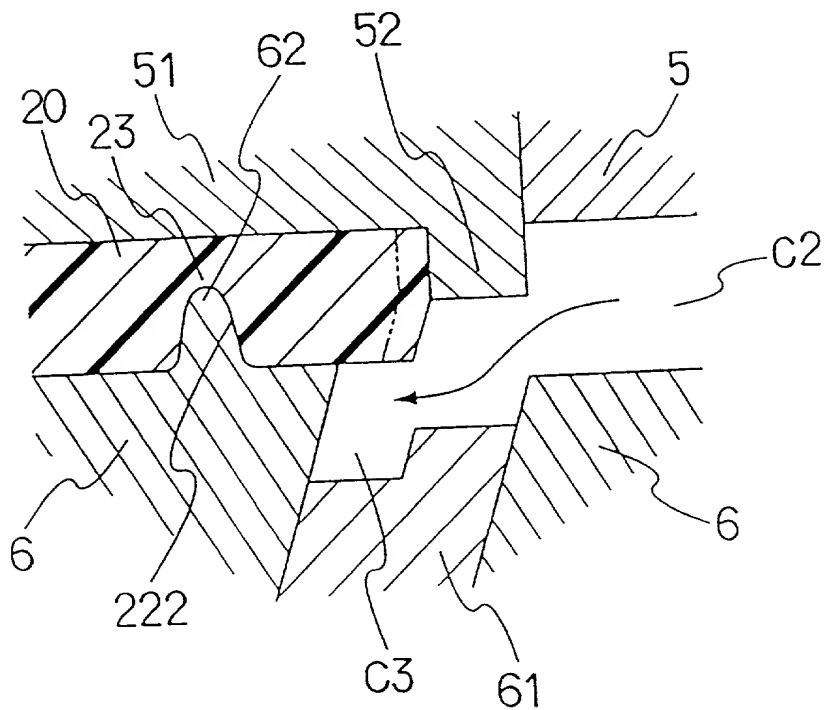
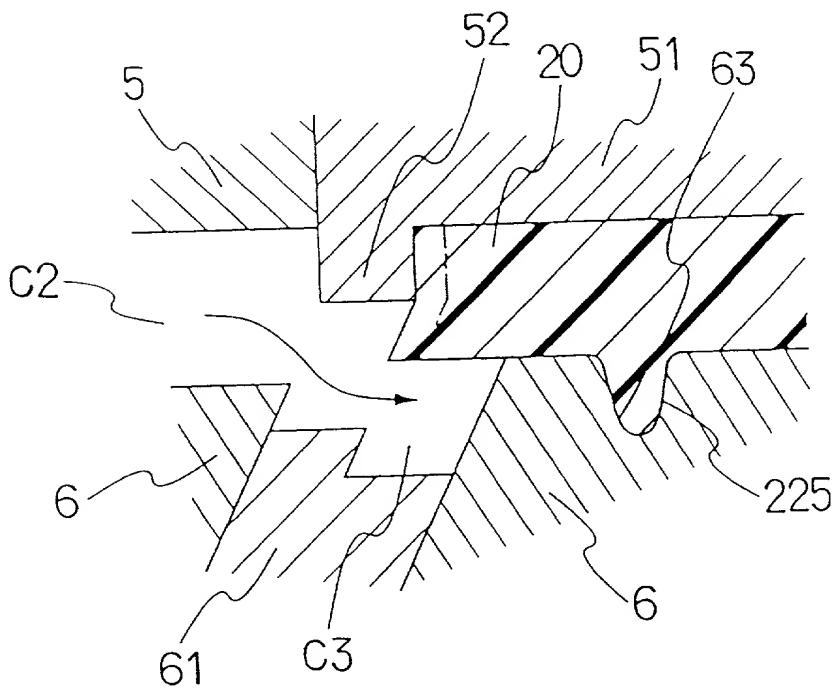


Fig. 32



09/462502

DOBLON ET AL (703) 413-3000
DOCKET # 10641-0001-39ET SHEET 19 OF 29
19/29

Fig. 33

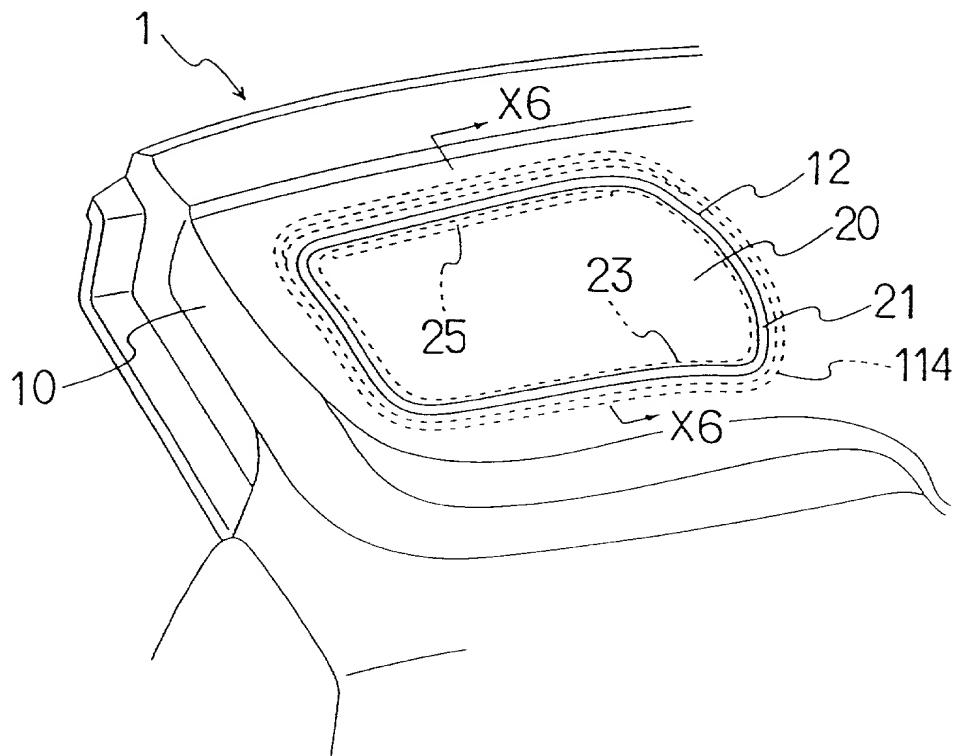
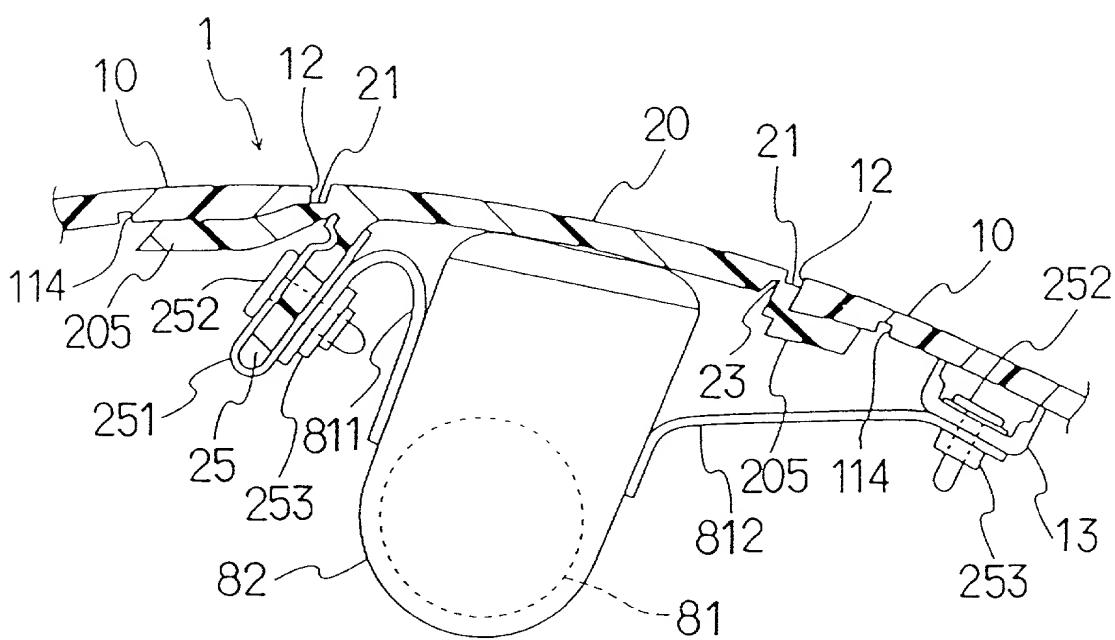


Fig. 34



09/462502

DOBLON ET AL (703) 413-3000
DOCKET # 10641-0001-3 PCT
SHEET 30 OF 29
20/29

Fig. 35

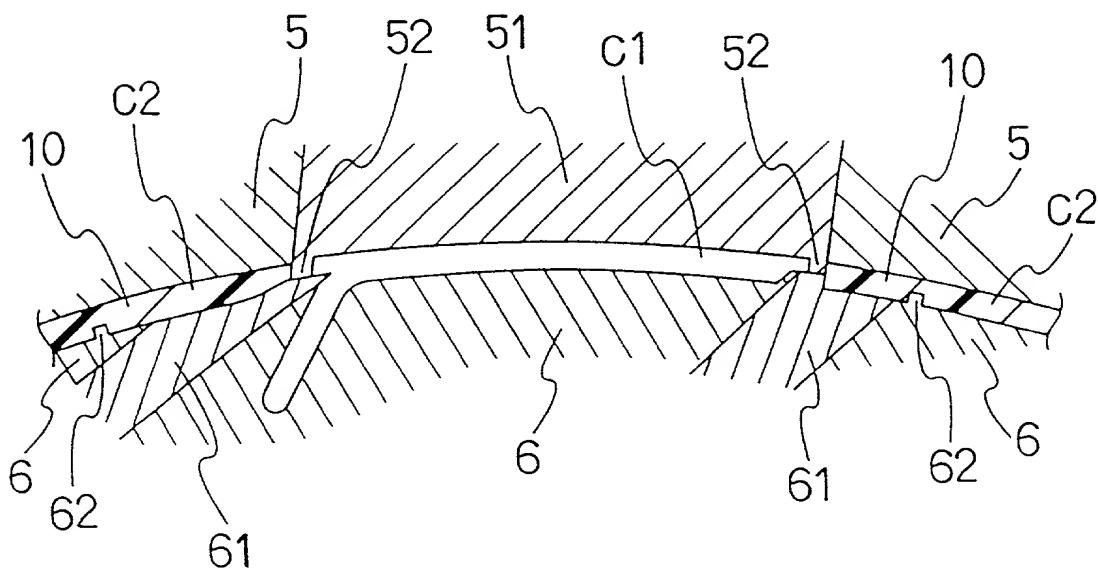
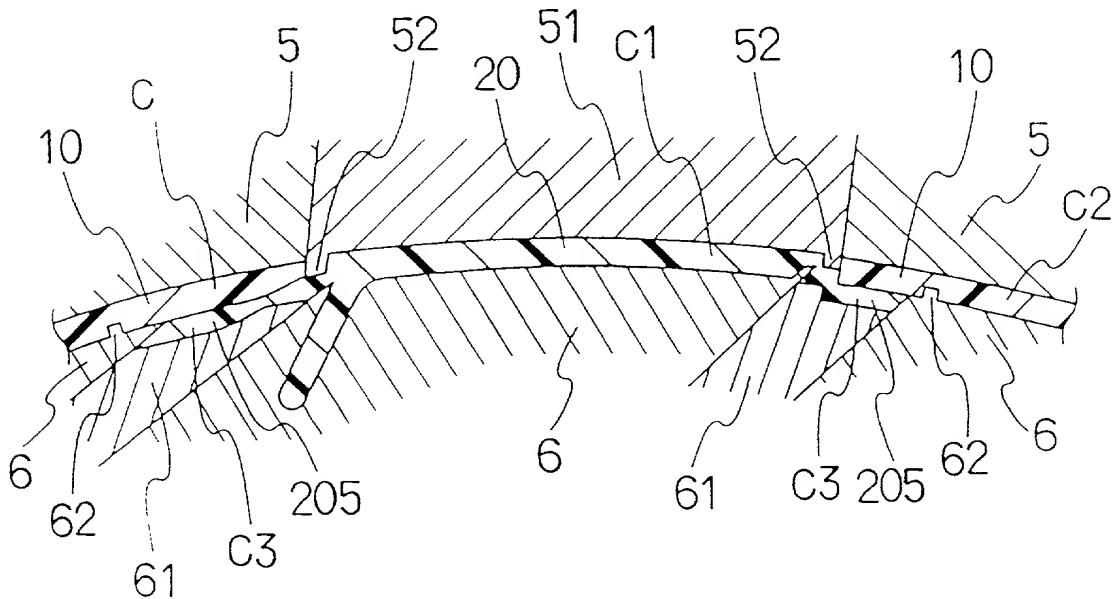


Fig. 36



09/462502

OBLON ET AL (703) 413-3000
DOCKET # 10641-0001-3 PCT
SHEET 21 OF 29
21/29

Fig. 37

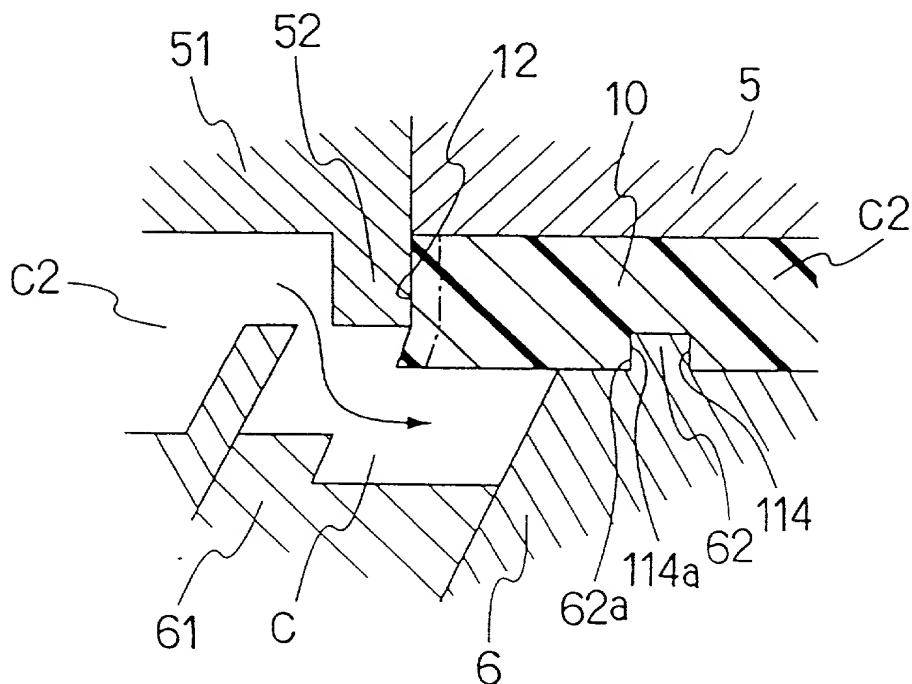
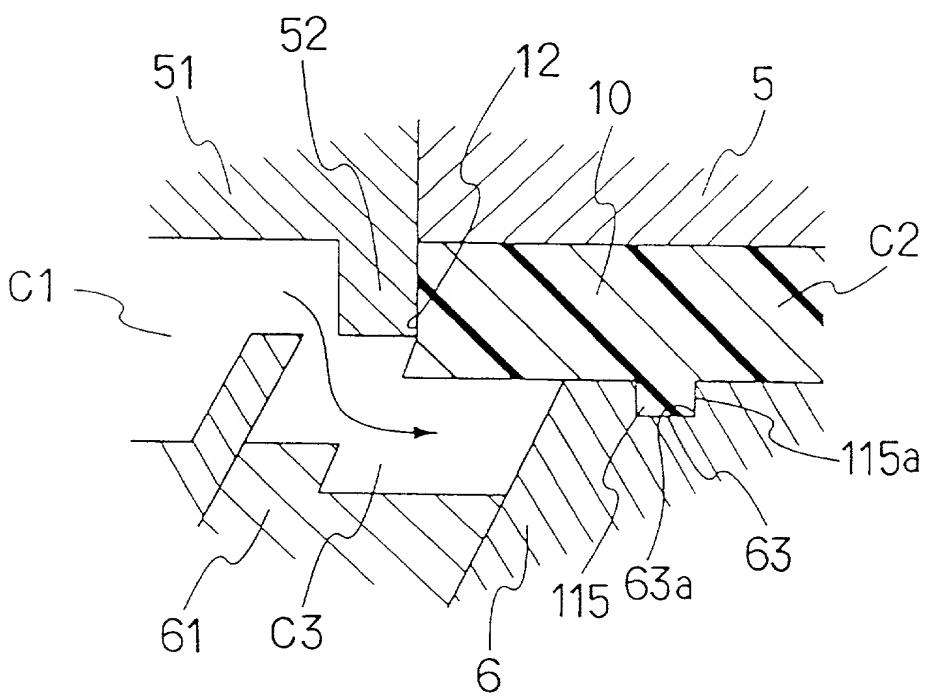


Fig. 38



09/462502

Fig.39

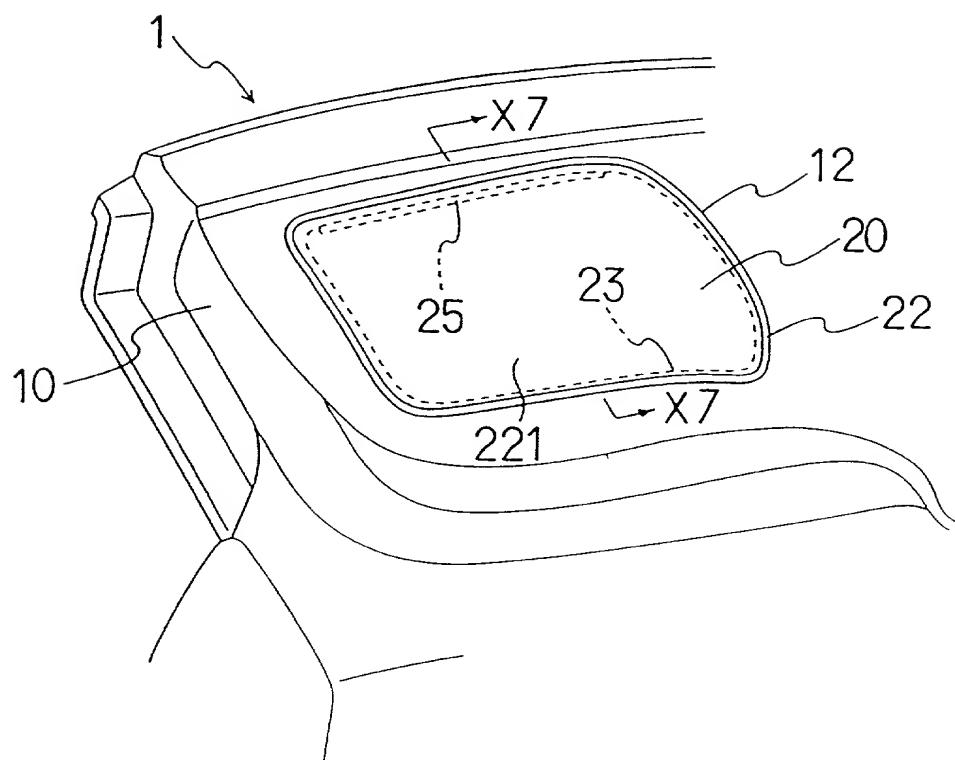
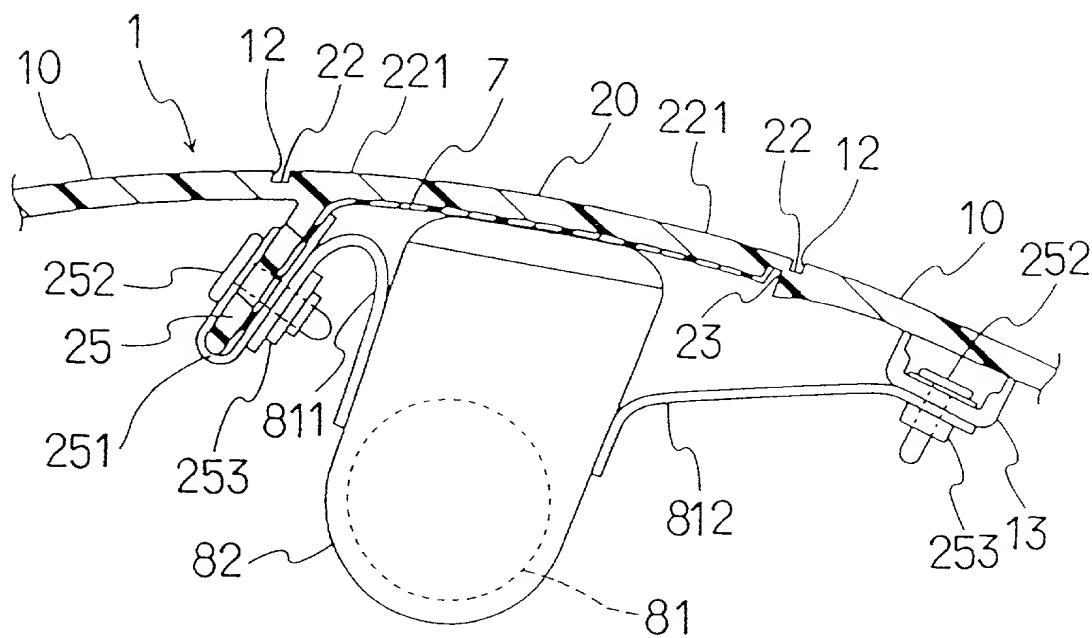


Fig.40



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FILED
10641-0001-3707
23/7/29

Fig. 41

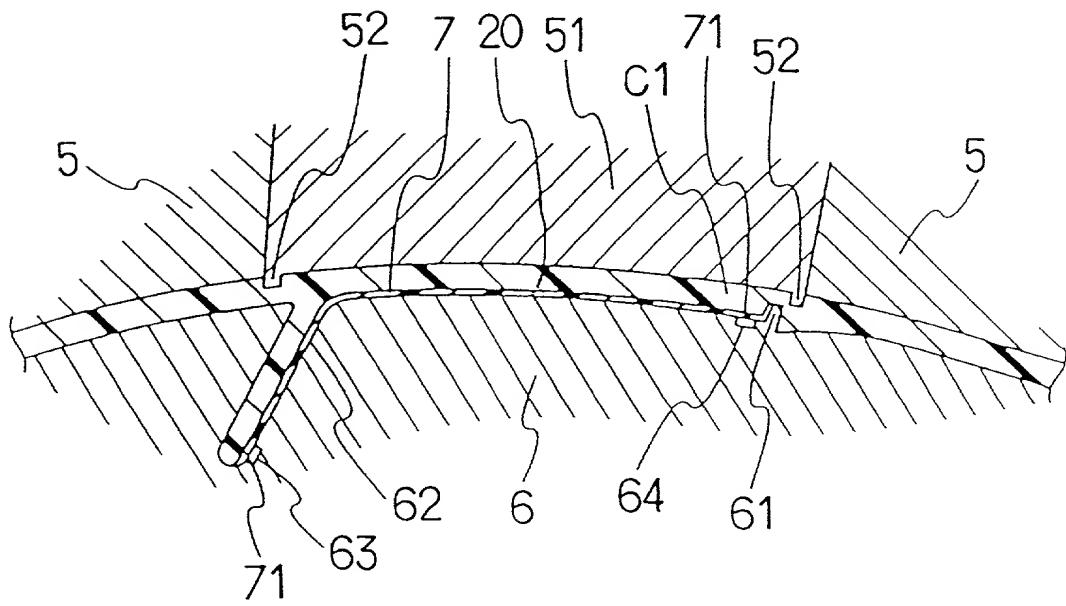


Fig. 42

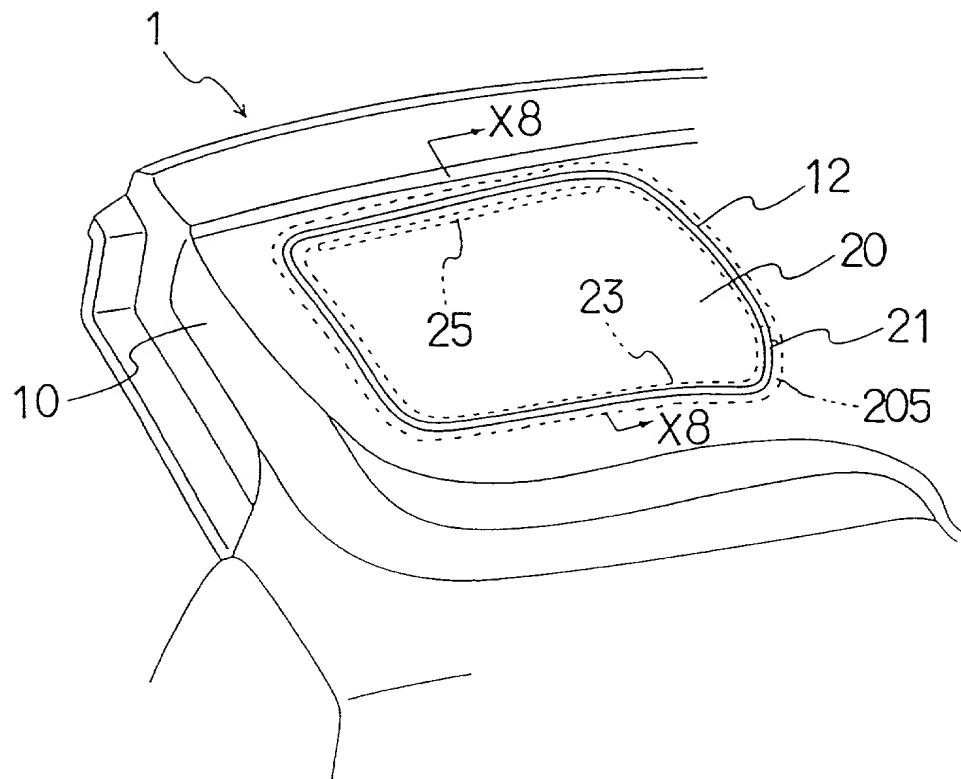
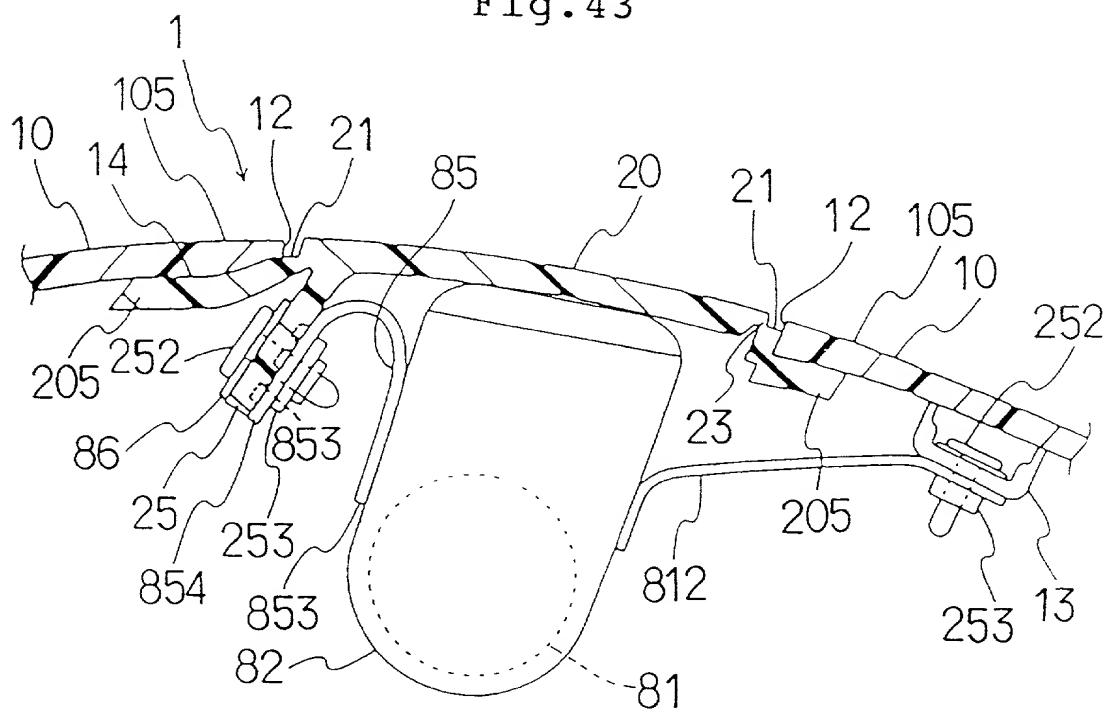


Fig. 43

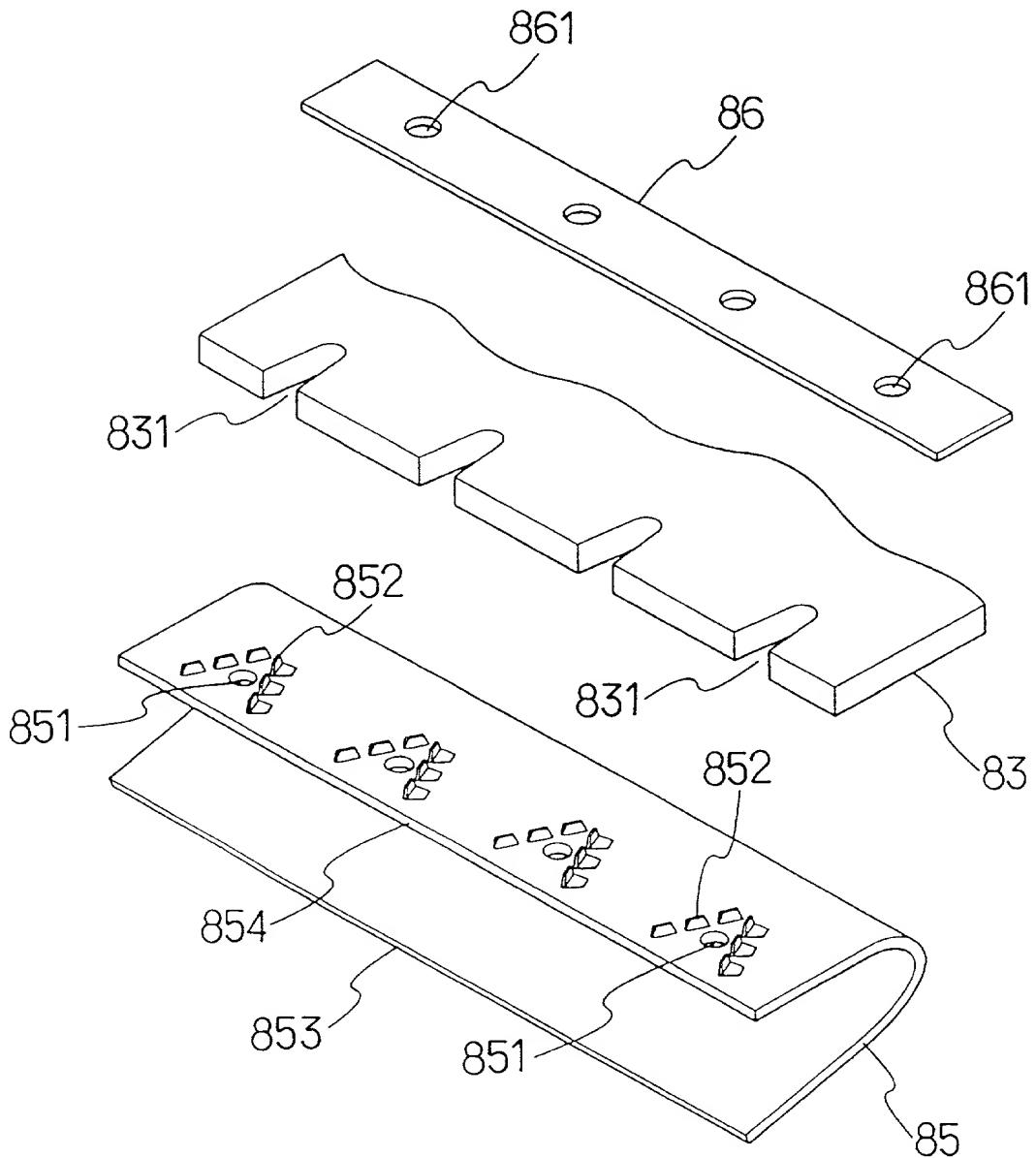


09/462502

OBLON ET AL (703) 413-3000

DOCKET # 10641-0001-3 PCT SHEET 25 OF 29

Fig. 44



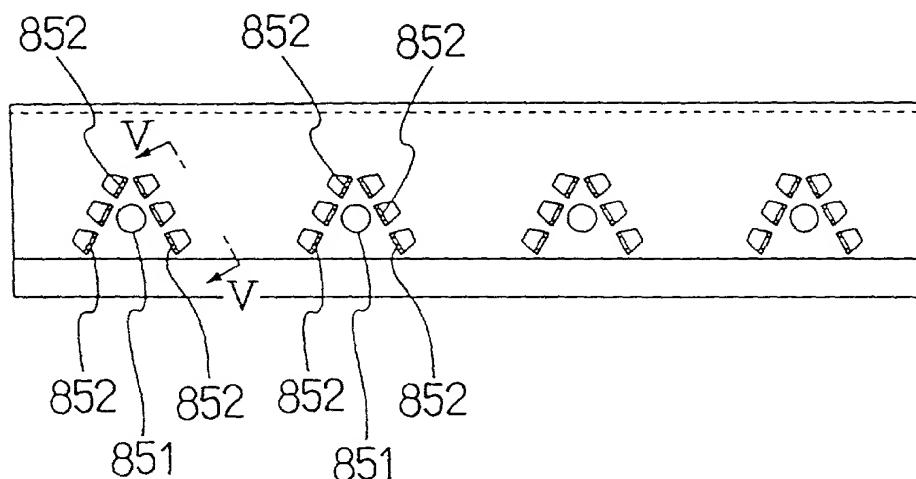
09/462502

26 / 29

OBLON ET AL (703) 413-3000

DOCKET # 10641-0001-3PCT SHEET 26 OF 29

Fig. 45



09/462502

Fig. 46

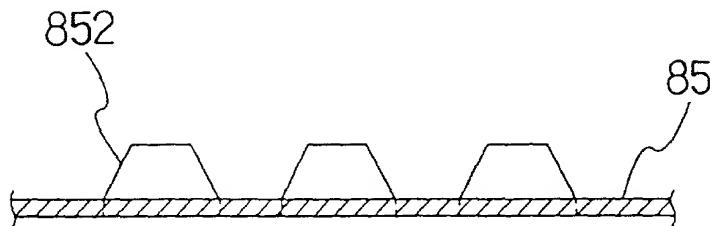


Fig. 47

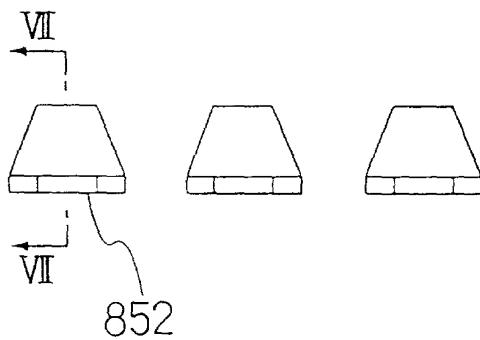
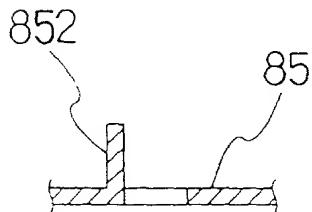


Fig. 48



09/462502

OBLON ET AL (703) 413-3000
102441-0001-3RET SHEET 28 OF 29
DOCKET # 28 / 29

Fig. 49

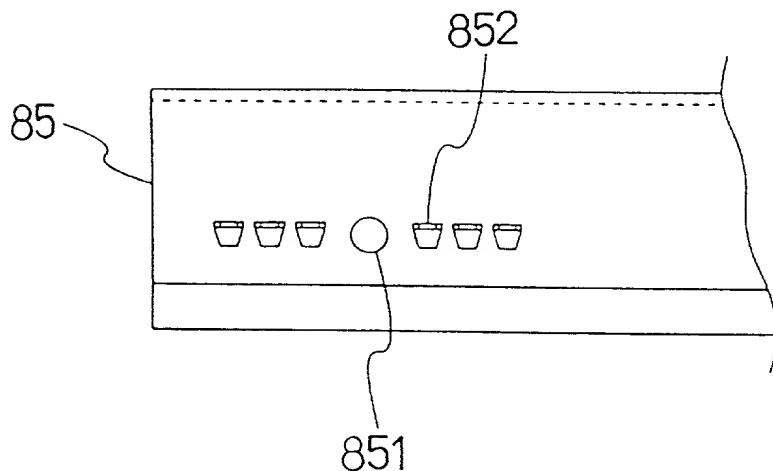
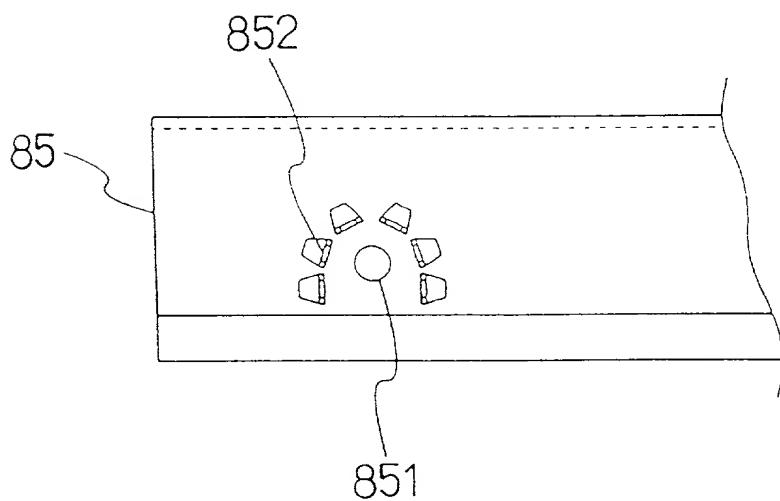


Fig. 50

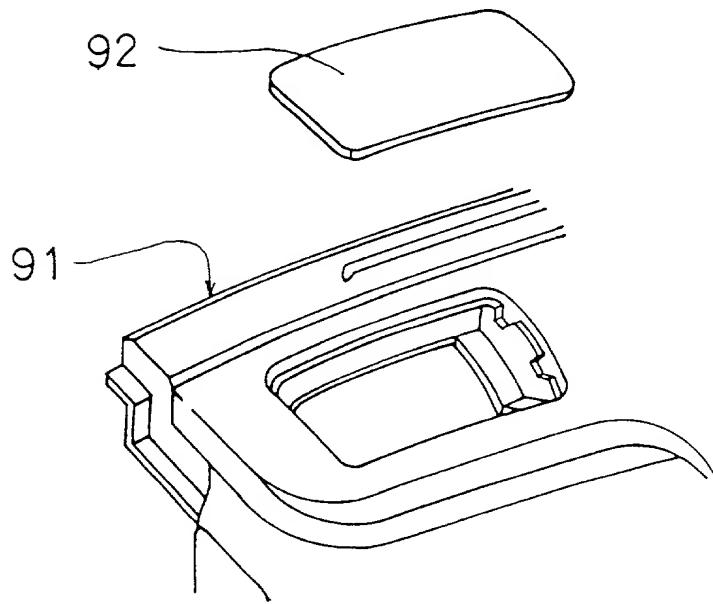


04/462502

OBLON ET AL (703) 413-3000

DOCKET # 29 / 2 SHEET 39 OF 29
10641-0001-3 PCT

Fig. 51



Declaration and Power of Attorney For Patent Application

特許出願宣言書及び委任状

Japanese Language Declaration

日本語宣言書

下記の氏名の発明者として、私は以下の通り宣言します。

私の住所、私書箱、国籍は下記の私の氏名の後に記載された通りです。

下記の名称の発明に関して請求範囲に記載され、特許出願している発明内容について、私が最初かつ唯一の発明者（下記の氏名が一つの場合）もしくは最初かつ共同発明者（下記の名称が複数の場合）であると信じています。

上記発明の明細書は、

- 本書に添付されています。
- ____月____日に提出され、米国出願番号または特許協定条約国際出願番号を_____とし、
(該当する場合) _____に訂正されました。

私は、特許請求範囲を含む上記訂正後の明細書を検討し、内容を理解していることをここに表明します。

私は、連邦規則法典第37編第1条56項に定義されるとおり、特許資格の有無について重要な情報を開示する義務があることを認めます。

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled.

PANEL FOR AIR BAGS AND METHOD OF MANUFACTURING THE SAME (as amended)

the specification of which

- is attached hereto.
- was filed on July 16, 1998 _____
as United States Application Number or
PCT International Application Number
PCT/JP98/03222 and was amended on
_____ (if applicable).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56.

Japanese Language Declaration

(日本語宣言書)

私は、米国法典第35編119条 (a) - (d) 項又は365条 (b) 項に基づき下記の、米国以外の国の少なくとも一ヵ国を指定する特許協力条約365 (a) 項に基づく国際出願、又は外国での特許出願もしくは発明者証の出願についての外国優先権をここに主張するとともに、優先権を主張している、本出願の前に出願された特許または発明者証の外国出願を以下に、枠内をマークすることで、示しています。

Prior Foreign Application(s)

外国での先行出願

9/214138

(Number)

(番号)

JAPAN

(Country)

(国名)

10/32079

(Number)

(番号)

JAPAN

(Country)

(国名)

con't to page 3

私は、第35編米国法典119条 (e) 項に基づいて下記の米国特許出願規定に記載された権利をここに主張いたします。

(Application No.)
(出願番号)

(Filing Date)
(出願日)

私は、下記の米国法典第35編120条に基づいて下記の米国特許出願に記載された権利、又は米国を指定している特許協力条約365条 (c) に基づく権利をここに主張します。また、本出願の各請求範囲の内容が米国法典第35編112条第1項又は特許協力条約で規定された方法で先行する米国特許出願に開示されていない限り、その先行米国出願書提出日以降で本出願書の日本国内または特許協力条約国提出日までの期間中に入手された、連邦規則法典第37編1条56項で定義された特許資格の有無に関する重要な情報について開示義務があることを認識しています。

PCT/JP98/03222

(Application No.)
(出願番号)

July 16, 1998

(Filing Date)
(出願日)

(Application No.)
(出願番号)

(Filing Date)
(出願日)

私は、私自信の知識に基づいて本宣言書中で私が行なう表明が真実であり、かつ私の入手した情報と私の信じるところに基づく表明が全て真実であると信じていること、さらに故意になされた虚偽の表明及びそれと同等の行為は米国法典第18編第1001条に基づき、罰金または拘禁、もしくはその両方により処罰されること、そしてそのような故意による虚偽の声明を行なえば、出願した、又は既に許可された特許の有効性が失われることを認識し、よってここに上記のごとく宣誓を致します。

I hereby claim foreign priority under Title 35, United States Code, Section 119 (a)-(d) or 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or Section 365(a) of any PCT International application which designated at least one country other than the United States, listed below and have also identified below, by checking the box, any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate, or PCT International application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed.

23/07/97

(Day/Month/Year Filed)
(出願年月日)

Priority Claimed
優先権主張

Yes
はい

No
いいえ

28/01/98

(Day/Month/Year Filed)
(出願年月日)

Yes
はい

No
いいえ

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, Section 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below.

(Application No.)
(出願番号)

(Filing Date)
(出願日)

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, Section 120 of any United States application(s), or Section 365(c) of any PCT International application designating the United States, listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States or PCT International application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code Section 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT International filing date of application.

(Status: Patented, Pending, Abandoned)
(現況 : 特許許可済、係属中、放棄済)

(Status: Patented, Pending, Abandoned)
(現況 : 特許許可済、係属中、放棄済)

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

Prior Foreign Application(s)

3) 10/32080	JAPAN	28/01/98	X YES
4) 10/32081	JAPAN	28/01/98	X YES
5) 10/32082	JAPAN	28/01/98	X YES
6) 10/33942	JAPAN	29/01/98	X YES
7) 10/54342	JAPAN	18/02/98	X YES

Japanese Language Declaration
(日本語宣言書)

委任状：私は下記の発明者として、本出願に関する一切の手続きを米特許商標局に対して遂行する弁理士または代理人として、下記の者を指名いたします。
(弁護士、または代理人の指名及び登録番号を明記のこと)

POWER OF ATTORNEY: As a named inventor, I hereby appoint the following attorney(s) and/or agent(s) to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith: (list name and registration number)

30
Norman F. Oblon, Reg. No. 24,618; Marvin J. Spivak, Reg. No. 24,913; C. Irvin McClelland, Reg. No. 21,124; Gregory J. Maier, Reg. No. 25,599; Arthur I. Neustadt, Reg. No. 24,854; Richard D. Kelly, Reg. No. 27,757; James D. Hamilton, Reg. No. 28,421; Eckhard H. Kuesters, Reg. No. 28,870; Robert T. Pous, Reg. No. 29,099; Charles L. Gholz, Reg. No. 26,395; Vincent J. Sunderdick, Reg. No. 29,004; William E. Beaumont, Reg. No. 30,996; Robert F. Gnuse, Reg. No. 27,295; Jean-Paul Lavalleye, Reg. No. 31,451; Stephen G. Baxter, Reg. No. 32,884; Martin M. Zoltick, Reg. No. 35,745; Robert W. Hahl, Reg. No. 33,893; Richard L. Treanor, Reg. No. 36,379; Steven P. Weihrouch, Reg. No. 32,829; John T. Goalkasian, Reg. No. 26,142; Richard L. Chinn, Reg. No. 34,305; Steven E. Lipman, Reg. No. 30,011; Carl E. Schlier, Reg. No. 34,426; James J. Kulbaski, Reg. No. 34,648; Richard A. Neifeld, Reg. No. 35,299; J. Derek Mason, Reg. No. 35,270; Sudinder Sachar, Reg. No. 34,423; Christina M. Gadiano, Reg. No. 37,628; Jeffrey B. McIntyre, Reg. No. 36,867; and Paul E. Rauch, Reg. No. 38,591 with full powers of substitution and revocation.

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(703) 413-3000

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発明者の署名	日付	Inventor's signature <u>Jasuo Kondo</u> Date <u>Jan. 10, 2000</u>
住所		Residence c/o TOYOTA SHATAI KABUSHIKI KAISHA, 100, Kanayama, Ichiriyama-cho, Kariya-shi, Aichi-ken, 448-8666, Japan <u>JPK</u>
国籍		Citizenship Japan
郵便の宛先		Post Office Address <u>Same as above</u>
第二の共同発明者の氏名		Full name of second joint inventor, if any <u>Nobuo INOMATA</u>
第二の共同発明者の署名	2-00	Second joint Inventor's signature <u>Nobuo Inomata</u> Date <u>Jan. 10, 2000</u>
住所		Residence c/o TOYOTA SHATAI KABUSHIKI KAISHA, 100, Kanayama, Ichiriyama-cho, Kariya-shi, Aichi-ken, 448-8666, Japan <u>JPK</u>
国籍		Citizenship Japan
郵便の宛先		Post Office Address <u>Same as above</u>

(第三以降の共同発明者についても同様に記載し、署名すること)

(Supply similar information and signature for third and subsequent joint inventors.)

Japanese Language Declaration

(日本語宣言書)

第三の共同発明者の氏名 <i>300</i>	Full name of third joint inventor, if any <u>Takashi UEDA</u>
第三の共同発明者の署名 日付	Third joint Inventor's signature <i>Takashi Ueda</i> Date <i>Jan. 10. 2000</i>
住所	Residence c/o TOYOTA SHATAI KABUSHIKI KAISHA, 100, Kanayama, Ichiriyama-cho, Kariya-shi, Aichi-ken, 448-8666, Japan <i>JPK</i>
国籍	Citizenship Japan
郵便の宛先	Post Office Address Same as above

第四の共同発明者の氏名 <i>400</i>	Full name of fourth joint inventor, if any <u>Isao HAYASHI</u>
第四の共同発明者の署名 日付	Fourth joint Inventor's signature <i>Isao Hayashi</i> Date <i>Jan. 10. 2000</i>
住所	Residence c/o TOYOTA SHATAI KABUSHIKI KAISHA, 100, Kanayama, Ichiriyama-cho, Kariya-shi, Aichi-ken, 448-8666, Japan <i>JPK</i>
国籍	Citizenship Japan
郵便の宛先	Post Office Address Same as above

第五の共同発明者の氏名 <i>500</i>	Full name of fifth joint inventor, if any <u>Tsutomu OKANO</u>
第五の共同発明者の署名 日付	Fifth joint Inventor's signature <i>Tsutomu Okano</i> Date <i>Jan. 10. 2000</i>
住所	Residence c/o TOYOTA SHATAI KABUSHIKI KAISHA, 100, Kanayama, Ichiriyama-cho, Kariya-shi, Aichi-ken, 448-8666, Japan <i>JPK</i>
国籍	Citizenship Japan
郵便の宛先	Post Office Address Same as above

第六の共同発明者の氏名 <i>600</i>	Full name of sixth joint inventor, if any <u>Haruo FUKUDA</u>
第六の共同発明者の署名 日付	Sixth joint Inventor's signature <i>Haruo Fukuda</i> Date <i>Jan. 10. 2000</i>
住所	Residence c/o TOYOTA SHATAI KABUSHIKI KAISHA, 100, Kanayama, Ichiriyama-cho, Kariya-shi, Aichi-ken, 448-8666, Japan <i>JPK</i>
国籍	Citizenship Japan
郵便の宛先	Post Office Address Same as above

(第六またはそれ以降の共同発明者に対しても同様な情報および署名を提供すること。)

(Supply similar information and signature for third and subsequent joint inventors.)

Japanese Language Declaration

(日本語宣言書)

Seventh

第三の共同発明者の氏名	7-00	Full name of joint inventor, if any <u>Yusaku FURUKAWA</u>
第三の共同発明者の署名	日付	Seventh joint Inventor's signature <u>Yusaku Furukawa</u> Date <u>Jun. 10, 2000</u>
住所		Residence c/o TOYOTA SHATAI KABUSHIKI KAISHA, 100, Kanayama, Ichiriyama-cho, Kariya-shi, Aichi-ken, 448-8666, Japan
国籍		Citizenship <u>JPX</u> Japan
郵便の宛先		Post Office Address <u>Same as above</u>

eighth

第四の共同発明者の氏名	8-00	Full name of joint inventor, if any <u>Torao KANAYAMA</u>
第四の共同発明者の署名	日付	Eighth joint Inventor's signature <u>Torao Kanayama</u> Date <u>Jan. 12, 2000</u>
住所		Residence c/o TOYOTA SHATAI KABUSHIKI KAISHA, 100, Kanayama, Ichiriyama-cho, Kariya-shi, Aichi-ken, 448-8666, Japan
国籍		Citizenship <u>JPX</u> Japan
郵便の宛先		Post Office Address <u>Same as above</u>

ninth

第五の共同発明者の氏名	9-00	Full name of joint inventor, if any <u>Akihiro MIWA</u>
第五の共同発明者の署名	日付	Ninth joint Inventor's signature <u>Akihiro Miwa</u> Date <u>Jan. 10, 2000</u>
住所		Residence c/o TOYOTA SHATAI KABUSHIKI KAISHA, 100, Kanayama, Ichiriyama-cho, Kariya-shi, Aichi-ken, 448-8666, Japan
国籍		Citizenship <u>JPX</u> Japan
郵便の宛先		Post Office Address <u>Same as above</u>

tenth

第六の共同発明者の氏名	10-00	Full name of joint inventor, if any <u>Hirofumi YAMADA</u>
第六の共同発明者の署名	日付	Tenth joint Inventor's signature <u>Hirofumi Yamada</u> Date <u>Jan. 12, 2000</u>
住所		Residence c/o TOYOTA SHATAI KABUSHIKI KAISHA, 100, Kanayama, Ichiriyama-cho, Kariya-shi, Aichi-ken, 448-8666, Japan
国籍		Citizenship <u>JPX</u> Japan
郵便の宛先		Post Office Address <u>Same as above</u>

(第六またはそれ以降の共同発明者に対しても同様な情報および署名を提供すること。)

(Supply similar information and signature for third and subsequent joint inventors.)